DPW working on a new 20-year highway master plan. PAGE 3
Montenegro takes over the HR reins at the Hyatt Regency. PAGE 5

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Torres tests positive for COVID-19

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres notified the public yesterday that he has tested positive for COVID-19.

In a statement released to the media, Torres said he remains in good spirits and is not experiencing any symptoms.

Torres

» Governor says he's doing well, continues to telework while on isolation

"I will continue to telework while in isolation and will do my part to keep my family, staff, and community safe," he said.

The governor said he received an antigen test last Sunday after having been in close contact with a family member who had tested positive for COVID-19 and was informed shortly after that he

See TORRES on Page 4

N. Korea confirms test of missile capable of striking Guam

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea confirmed Monday it test-launched an intermediate-range ballistic missile capable of reaching the U.S. territory of Guam, the North's most significant weapon launch in years, as Washington plans to respond to demonstrate it's committed to its allies' security in the region.

The official Korean Central News Agency said Sunday's test of the Hwasong-12 missile was aimed at selectively evaluating the missile being produced and deployed and verify its overall accuracy.

See N. KOREA on Page 4

136 new cases ID'd in 3 days

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Guam confirms five more COVID-related deaths, 10 omicron cases

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. reported a total of 136 new COVID-19 cases that were identified in three separate days, bringing the CNMI total to 4,908 cases since March 26, 2020.

CHCC reported yesterday that 44 additional individuals have been confirmed positive for COVID-19, with 42 who were identified on Jan. 30 and two on Jan. 28.

These were in addition to the

See 136 on Page 4

Zoning denies SCA conditional use application

» SCA given notice to vacate premises within 60 days

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Zoning Board unanimously voted yesterday to deny Saipan Cares for Animals' conditional use application. However, Zoning granted SCA a 60-day period from the date of publication of the order in the Commonwealth Register

See ZONING on Page 4

PROTECT OUR TREES LADYVIR CANAPE

Photo on the left shows a flame tree and noni tree sapling a month ago at Garapan Fishing Base, right after a yellow tire was placed by the Lions Club to protect the plant. Photo on the right shows the same plant last Saturday with the stem of the noni tree sapling apparently cut off.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:12pm, Jan. 31, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **99.3%**

Days since last community transmission: **2**

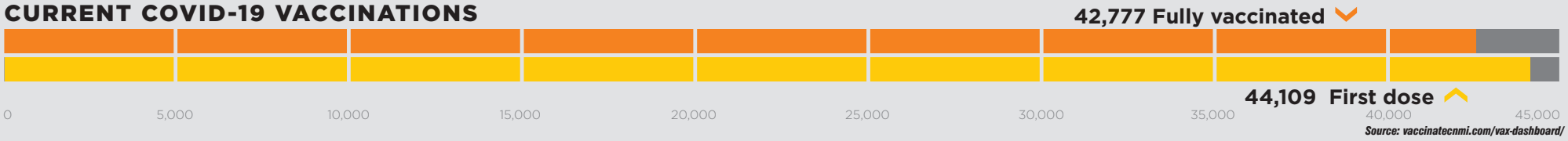
Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	37,666
Fully Vaccinated:	36,503
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,320
Fully Vaccinated:	5,151
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,123

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	31,804	527	32,331
Recovered	23,369	1,743	25,112
Active	6,402	527	6,929
Deaths	285	5	290

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	4,772	136	4,908
Traced via Travel Screening	539	19	558
Traced via Community Screening	4,233	117	4,350
Deaths	23	0	23

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

SUPPLEMENT
Today issue comes with a pullout supplement celebrating the Lunar New Year.
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BUSINESS
Cyberattacks are becoming a growing threat to pandemic-weary U.S. schools.
Page 17

LIFE & STYLE
Cheslie Kryst, the 2019 winner of the Miss USA pageant, has died at age 30.
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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

SCC names four 2021 honorees at gala

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce announced its picks for Small Business, Start-Up, Nonprofit, Saipan Young Professional, and Chamber Member of the year during SCC's "Business Person of the Year Annual Gala" last Saturday at Kensington Hotel Saipan's Kensington Hall.

The Chamber also installed and swore in its 2022 board of directors officers and members, with Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo swearing in the new officers.

Named as SCC's 2021 Small Business of the Year is local consulting firm Turn-Key Solutions. Also vying for the award were food business Cristianaos Kitchen and handmade jewelry maker SPNdylus670.

According to a nominee bio prepared by SCC, Turn-Key Solutions is a "local CNMI consulting firm that specializes in customized Web development/ design, database development and management, search engine optimization, marketing, and data analytics utilizing the latest technology trends."

Some of the firm's notable work include the development and managing of the Vaccinate CNMI, COVID-19 Travelers Quarantine and Management, and the Community-Based Testing websites.

Named as SCC's 2021 Start-Up of the Year is local gelato maker Tyler's Gelatte Stone. Also nominated for the award was restaurant Kamakazee's. According to its nominee bio, Tyler's Gelatte Stone uses its platform "not only to serve delicious treats but also give back to the community through our philanthropic events including 'Small Business Sundays.'"

Winning 2021 Nonprofit of the Year is CNMI maritime traditions promoter and practitioner 500 Sails. Also nominated for the award were outpatient primary care clinic Kagman Isla Community Center and women's empowerment and advocacy organization Soroptimist International NMI Chapter.

A nonprofit organization "dedicated to the revival, promotion, and practice of the maritime cultural traditions of the Mariana Islands," 500 Sails integrates "traditional cultural values into modern life" through its various community engagement activities.

JOSHUA SANTOS

Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo swears in the new officers and board members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce during SCC's "Business Person of the Year Annual Gala" last Saturday at Kensington Hotel Saipan's Kensington Hall.

JOSHUA SANTOS

Emma and Pete Perez of 500 Sails pose with Saipan Chamber of Commerce officers after the group was named the 2021 Nonprofit of the Year during SCC's "Business Person of the Year Annual Gala" last Saturday at Kensington Hotel Saipan's Kensington Hall.

JOSHUA SANTOS

TurnKey Solutions business co-owner Billy Grow and other members of the TurnKey Solutions teams are congratulated by Saipan Chamber of Commerce officers after the company was named the 2021 Small Business of the Year

JOSHUA SANTOS

Marianas Variety president Amier Younis receives the award on behalf of Jihan Younis, who was named the 2021 Saipan Young Professional of the Year during SCC's "Business Person of the Year Annual Gala" last Saturday at Kensington Hotel Saipan's Kensington Hall.

JOSHUA SANTOS

Brian Shin, sixth from left, chief executive officer of the Global Hotel Division of E-Land Group, shares a picture with Saipan Chamber of Commerce board of directors and officers after being named SCC's 2021 Business Person of the Year during SCC's "Business Person of the Year Annual Gala" last Jan. 29 at Kensington Hotel Saipan's Kensington Hall.

» Chamber installs new board officers, members

Winning the 2021 Saipan Young Professional of the Year honor was Jihan B. Younis. Also nominated was Docomo Pacific CNMI brand manager Brent C. Deleon Guerrero.

Younis recently accepted a position with the Mariana Islands Refuge and Monument Complex as a park ranger/ visitor services specialist for the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument.

According to her nominee bio, Younis has been involved in various environmental conservation programs in the CNMI and has helped manage a "small family restaurant committed to using only whole-some ingredients."

Winning SCC's 2021 Chamber Member of the Year was MarPac Inc. Other nominees included Docomo Pacific, Bridge Capital LLC, and the Northern Marianas College.

New officers

Remaining in their current roles and serving as SCC's 2022 board officers are president Joe Guerrero of Naked Fish Bar & Grill, vice president Shayne Villanueva of AB Risk Solutions, and secretary Marcia Calvo of Calvo's Insurance. Janice Tenorio of IT&E is the SCC board's new treasurer.

Other members of SCC's 2022 board of directors include Alex Sablan of Tan-Holdings Corp., Das Krishnan of Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Dr. Joshua Wise of PHI Pharmacy, Nicole Babauta of Docomo Pacific, and Velma Palacios of IT&E.

Before the members were installed and sworn in, Villanueva thanked former SCC board treasurer Michael Johnson of Deloitte & Touche and former board member Glen Hunter of The Shack for their time and contributions to SCC and its board.

"We're excited for their journey, their next steps, and we're definitely excited for our journey, our next steps," Villanueva added.

$10K bail set for man involved in hit and run

The Superior Court has imposed a $10,000 cash bail on a man accused of purposely hitting his former girlfriend's car while driving down As Perdido road because she refused to pull over.

During a bail hearing yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed a $10,000 cash bail on Dean Anthony Frederick A. Borja, 37, for hitting his ex-girlfriend's car because she did not want to pull over and talk to him.

Borja, who is facing charges of disturbing the peace to include domestic violence and assault with a dangerous weapon, was remanded back to Department of Corrections custody. He was ordered to return to court on Feb. 9 at 10am for a preliminary while his arraignment was set for Feb. 14 at 9am before Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto Naraja.

According to court documents, Department of Public Safety officers responded to a hit and run report at the GuangDong Hardware traffic light intersection along As Perdido road at around 5:16pm on Dec. 27, 2021.

At the scene, officers came upon a black 2020 Mitsubishi Mirage along the shoulder of the road with a large dent on the left side.

When police opened the driver's side of the vehicle, they noticed that the airbag had been deployed with a crying female driving the car. Police noted that the woman sustained minor injuries to her chest as a result of the crash.

The victim said her ex-boyfriend, Borja, hit her vehicle and had been chasing her car from Isa Drive in Papago, trying to flag her down to get her to pull over and talk to him.

At the time police were interviewing the victim, the car that the victim had described as being driven by Borja was seen driving at a high rate of speed coming from Koblerville and was headed east.

The victim told police that, as she was driving down Isa Drive, Borja pulled to the left side of her car and kept yelling at her to pull over but she continued driving. Shortly after, the victim said Borja called her phone and continued to yell at her to pull over but she hung up. He allegedly continued to call her but she wouldn't answer any of his calls.

Then, as she was making a right turn at the traffic light by Guangdong Hardware to head west, Borja allegedly pulled to the left side of her car and when he was parallel to her, he allegedly veered right, struck her vehicle, and then fled the scene.

Meanwhile, police did a violator stop on Borja in As Gonno.

During this time, police asked Borja if he did hit the victim's car and he confirmed that he did. When he was asked why, he said it was because she didn't want to pull over and talk to him.

Borja was arrested back in 2004 for sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree and was jailed. He was also arrested back in 2016 for assault and battery. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

DPW working on a new 20-year highway master plan

The Department of Public Works has come up with a new 20-year CNMI Highway Master Plan that aims to identify and examine transportation-related issues, from mobility and safety to congestion.

Ada

DPW Secretary James A. Ada recently informed Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) about their move to update the long-range highway master plan.

Ada said the new master plan focuses on strategies for future programming and short-term improvements that can be quickly and effectively implemented, pertaining to automobile travel, public transportation, walking and bicycling, commercial motor vehicles, as well as waterway and aviation facilities.

He also disclosed that they are hosting public involvement meetings for each island, whether it be face to face or virtual in early February 2022. The purpose of the workshops is to gather public feedback about the current state of highways on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, which will be considered to support the master plan update.

The Rota public workshop has already been done last week at the Rota Mayor's Office, while the one on Tinian will be held on Feb. 2, 5pm to 7pm, at Tinian High School. The Saipan public workshop will be on Feb. 10, 5pm to 7pm, at the Kagman Community Center.

According the 20-year master plan, DPW collected new traffic count data in the CNMI in June 2021 and it showed a decrease of about 35% in traffic volume levels compared to 2008.

As the economy continues to open up for increasing tourism, and as COVID-19 rates continue to decrease, DPW projects that the traffic volumes will similarly increase.

DPW said that based on long-term tourism growth and historical trends, current traffic volumes with the expected tourism can theoretically be estimated and evaluated for baseline conditions for the purposes of updating the 20-year Highway Master Plan.

Due to the ongoing global pandemic, DPW said, visitorship, tourism and travel conditions are significantly lower in the CNMI.

DPW said that, according to the Marianas Visitors Authority, annual visitor arrival economic indicators report that arrivals in the Marianas between 2008 and 2017 gradually increased, with a spike from 2016 and 2017, and then a decline in visitors since 2017.

Quarterly visitorship over the last couple of years shows the gradual decline, and then the drastic effect that the pandemic has had on visitorship in 2020. However, MVA said, tourism is anticipated to return to pre-pandemic levels in the future.

According to MVA, arrivals grew 75% to 1,107 visitors in September 2021, compared to 130 visitors in September 2020. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB22-CHCC/PH-NCDB-009

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 4, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"LEASE OF VEHICLE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB22-PAO-42200044

SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2022 TIME: 9:00 A.M

"LEASE OF ONE (1) CLASS "F" FOUR (4) DOOR PICK UP TRUCK FOR THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OFFICE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT HORIGUCHI BLDG., GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY AND OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ PATRICK C. GUERRERO
GOVERNOR'S AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

Faith, Hope and KARIDAT

A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) ACCOUNTANT

For more information, job description and an application visit the Karidat main office at Sister Remedios Community Center, Chalan Kanoa.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: A completed application form, copy of diploma/degree, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of valid CNMI driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.
CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, February 11, 2022 AT 4:00 PM

May good fortune shine
on you in the new year.
Happy Lunar New Year!
Hafa Adai!
from the staff and management of
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Department of Public Works
2nd Floor – Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-9828

PUBLIC NOTICE:
HIGHWAY MASTER PLAN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The CNMI Department of Public Works is updating its 20-Year Highway Master Plan, last revised in 2009. The Highway Master Plan will identify and examine transportation issues related to **mobility, safety, and congestion** on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. This plan document will clearly identify transportation system goals, policies, and needs, as well as the necessary analysis tools over the next 20 years.

We invite you to visit the ***Interactive Project Map*** to leave your comments or attend a workshop event that will be hosted to gather public feedback about the current state of the highways. Three meetings will be held in-person at the following locations and times, as well as virtually via Zoom (see website link below or QR Code):

- **Rota**
  - Mayor's Office
  - Wednesday, January 26, 5:00-7:00 pm
- **Tinian**
  - Tinian High School
  - Wednesday, February 2, 5:00-7:00 pm
- **Saipan**
  - Kagman Community Center
  - Thursday, February 10, 5:00-7:00 pm

SCAN ME

For more information about the Highway Master Plan update, to leave comments, or access the Zoom meetings, visit the project website at ***https://qrco.de/bcggeN*** or by scanning the QR code above.

HENRY BAUTISTA
Senior Highway Engineer, Department of Public Works

Alleged peeping tom's suit vs local newspapers dismissed

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has dismissed the lawsuit filed by an alleged peeping tom against the CNMI government and local newspapers because it was found frivolous or had no legal merit.

District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona issued an order last Friday dismissing with prejudice the lawsuit filed by Brandon M. Rangamar. This means Rangamar can still refile the case.

Specifically, Manglona said, Rangamar's fifth and fourteenth amendment claims were dismissed for frivolousness. However, the court found that Rangamar may have a potentially viable claim for defamation, but he must allege sufficient facts establishing diversity jurisdiction for that claim.

As a result, the court dismissed Rangamar's complaint with leave to amend as to his defamation claim only. If Rangamar seeks to pursue this claim, he must file a first amended complaint no later than Feb. 28, 2022. The judge added that failure to file an amended complaint by this deadline will result in the court dismissing this action with prejudice and directing the Clerk of Court to close the case.

According to the order, Rangamar alleged a fifth and fourteenth amendment violation by the CNMI government, the CNMI Department of Public Safety, *Saipan Tribune,* and *Marianas Variety News*.

"The court concludes, however, that his constitutional claims are frivolous. A complaint is frivolous where it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact. Notably, his constitutional claims fail against defendants *Saipan Tribune* and *Marianas Variety News*. A threshold requirement of any constitutional claim is the presence of state action, where a private party is charged for the deprivation of rights, a private party's actions must be 'properly attributable to the state,'" the judge said.

Manglona explained that Rangamar asserts claims against local newspapers—private actors—for publishing headlines regarding him, but fails to establish that those actions were attributed to the government. Because of this, as a threshold matter, the constitutional claims fail against those two defendants. The court must therefore determine whether his constitutional claims survive against the CNMI government and the Department of Public Safety.

In regards to Rangamar's allegations that the Department of Public Safety embarrassed him by posting a photo and information of his alleged crime, it was pointed out that CNMI law permits such action, has nothing to do with double jeopardy, self-incrimination, taking of private property for public use, or any deprivation of life, liberty, or property without due process. Therefore, his fifth amendment claim fails against the state actors and cannot be cured by filing any amended complaint.

According to a previous *Saipan Tribune* article, Rangamar, 48, filed a lawsuit with the U.S District Court for the NMI against the CNMI government, DPS, *Saipan Tribune*, and *Marianas Variety* following the publication of his mugshot and details of his ongoing case back in September 2021.

Rangamar was arrested back in April for allegedly looking through a bathroom window while a woman was showering.

According to the lawsuit he filed representing himself, Rangamar claims that the publication of the case against him caused him and his family stress, embarrassment, and loss of possible employment.

He takes issue with the CNMI government for allowing the publication of damaging information of crimes still pending court proceedings.

As for DPS, he is suing DPS for publicly embarrassing him by releasing his photo and details about his case.

Rangamar is suing *Saipan Tribune* and *Marianas Variety* for defamation and slander, accusing both newspapers of published headlines "with careless defamation and slander."

CPA invites public to town hall meetings

The Commonwealth Ports Authority gave notice yesterday that town hall meetings are being held to address matters surrounding the 2020 audit report, the passenger facility charges audit, and the litigation history between Star Marianas Air and CPA.

The town hall meeting will be held on the following dates:

■ **SAIPAN:** Thursday, Feb. 3, 2022, 6pm in the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport's departure area.

■ **ROTA:** Tuesday, Feb. 8, 2022, 6pm in the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport's departure area.

■ **TINIAN:** Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022, 6pm at the Tinian International Airport's departure terminal.

Persons wishing to make comments may do so in person or may email them to cpa.receptionist@pticom.com by no later than 4pm on Feb. 23, 2022. ***(PR)***

N. KOREA

From Page 1

It said a camera installed at the missile's warhead took an image of Earth from space, and the Academy of Defense Science confirmed the accuracy, security and effectiveness of the operation of the weapons system.

North Korea said the missile was launched toward the waters off its east coast and on a high angle to prevent it from overflying other countries. It gave no further details.

According to South Korean and Japanese assessment, the missile flew about 800 kilometers (497 miles) and reached a maximum altitude of 2,000 kilometers (1,242 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

The reported flight details make it the most powerful missile North Korea tested since 2017, when the country launched Hwasong-12 and longer-range missiles in a torrid run of weapons firings to acquire an ability to launch nuclear strikes on U.S. military bases in North Asia and the Pacific and even the American homeland.

The Hwasong-12 missile is a nuclear-capable ground-to-ground weapon, whose maximum range is 4,500 kilometers (2,800 miles) when it's fired on a standard trajectory. It's a distance sufficient to reach the U.S. territory of Guam. In August 2017, at the height of animosities with the then-Trump administration, North Korea's Strategic Forces threatened to make "an enveloping fire" near Gaum with Hwasong-12 missiles.

TORRES

From Page 1

tested positive for COVID-19.

"I'm doing well," said Torres in a text message in response to *Saipan Tribune*'s inquiry about his condition.

Torres said he also took COVID-19 tests on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and had tested negative on all three of those tests.

The Office of the Governor news release quoted Torres as being thankful for having received his vaccinations and booster shot, and will quarantine at home as per current COVID-19 protocols.

According to updated COVID-19 protocols, effective last Saturday, Jan. 29, individuals confirmed positive with the virus and are asymptomatic must stay at home for at least five days, isolate, and wear a well-fitted mask around others.

The governor extended his appreciation to the COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. for their continued work and commitment to keeping the community safe.

He said he will continue to thank CNMI residents for following the most updated COVID-19 protocols.

"As a Commonwealth, we are living through the new normal of this pandemic. Our community's ability to come together to face this challenge is a testament of our strength and resilience," Torres said.

As of yesterday, the CNMI's vaccination rate was already at 99.3%.

Pointing out that vaccinations help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, Torres urged unvaccinated individuals to be vaccinated, and for the community to consider getting booster shots.

"Please also remember to practice the 3 W's—wear your mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance," he said.

ZONING

From Page 1

to cease operations and vacate its As Gonno premises. SCA will not be assessed a fine for its violations, but may be subject to immediate cessation of all operations and activities if certain conditions are still not met after this 60-day period.

This was all learned during a Zoning special board meeting yesterday at the Office of the Governor conference room. The motion on SCA's application and the conditions for SCA attached were motioned by Zoning board chair Perry Inos Jr. The motion was seconded by board vice chair Francisco Aguon.

After going through preliminary matters, the board then went into executive session to speak with its legal counsel about SCA's application and other items on the board's agenda. After this discussion, as well as accounting for the information provided to the Zoning board thus far, SCA has been deemed noncompliant with select laws and respective Zoning regulations.

"In executive session, we discussed with legal counsel for advice for the conditional use application on today's agenda. …With the current information provided to the Zoning board, we are advised they are not compliant with the law," said Inos.

However, Inos acknowledged that ordering SCA to cease all operations immediately would be a public health and safety concern for the animals and Saipan community at large. After close consideration, a 60-day move-out period was deemed appropriate.

"We are dealing with animal lives. …[Immediately ceasing] Saipan Cares' operations may result in public health issues and uncared [for] animals roaming the community. We do understand that it is the Zoning board's policy to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of our residents and visitors. …This motion [if decided on] will allow Saipan Cares time to cease activities and is…tailored to what's been presented to us in the past year to date," said Inos.

SCA submitted its conditional use application to the Zoning office in December 2020, and a public hearing regarding this application was held on Feb. 3, 2021, during which public comments were received and Zoning tabled its decision on SCA's application to August 2021.

The Zoning board met later in 2021 to discuss a separate application related to SCA. During this later 2021 meeting, the board allowed SCA to remain at its As Gonno location until February 2022, today.

During a Zoning board meeting on Jan. 19, 2022, one item on the agenda was a 12-month extension for SCA at its As Gonno location. This extension was denied.

It was made clear that there has never been a decision made by the Zoning board on SCA's application until yesterday's board meeting.

Inos' motion regarding SCA's application was to deny SCA's conditional use application, grant SCA a 60-day period effective the publication of the order in the Commonwealth Register to cease all operations and vacate the premises, and to order SCA to follow several conditions during the 60-day period.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

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From Page 1

92 individuals who were identified and confirmed positive on Jan. 29. Of the 92, a total of 55 were found through contact tracing, 25 through community testing, and 12 through travel testing.

Of the 44 cases reported yesterday, 25 were identified via contact tracing, 12 via community testing, and seven via travel testing. Four of the cases were identified on Rota.

All 136 new cases have since been isolated and are being actively monitored, said CHCC.

As of Jan. 31, there were 10 individuals hospitalized as a result of COVID-19: five unvaccinated, four vaccinated, one partially vaccinated. One of these 10 is on a ventilator. Three have been discharged.

As of Jan. 29, there have been 4,143 recoveries, 742 active cases, and 23 total COVID-19-related deaths of the CNMI's 4,908 total cases since March 2020.

Guam confirms five more COVID-related deaths, 10 omicron cases

Guam reported five more COVID-19-related deaths yesterday, bringing the island's COVID-19 death toll to 290. Guam also reported that 10 individuals were identified as having the omicron variant of COVID-19.

The Joint Information Center in Guam reported yesterday the island's 286th to 290th COVID-19-related deaths.

Guam's 286th COVID-19-related death was a 63-year-old unvaccinated male with underlying health conditions. He was pronounced dead at the chief medical examiner's morgue on Jan. 15, 2022. He tested positive for COVID-19 on Dec. 22, 2021.

The 287th was a 57-year-old vaccinated male with underlying health conditions. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam on Jan. 27. He tested positive on Jan. 27.

The 288th was a 94-year-old vaccinated female with underlying health conditions. She was pronounced dead on arrival at the Guam Memorial Hospital on Jan. 29. She tested positive on Jan. 30.

The 289th was an 82-year-old vaccinated female with underlying health conditions. she was pronounced dead on arrival at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam on Jan. 29. She tested positive on Jan. 29.

The 290th was a 76-year-old vaccinated female with underlying health conditions. She was pronounced dead on arrival at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam on Jan. 29. She tested positive on Jan. 29.

In a statement from acting Guam Gov. Joshua Tenorio, he said: "Gov. Lou [Leon Guerrero], first gentleman Jeff [Cook], and I pray for comfort for the families of those we've lost during this pandemic. Our fight continues and we must use all defenses known to us, especially around those we love and feel most comfortable with. There is no shame in being overly cautious or overly protective; the community will be stronger for it."

Montenegro takes over the HR reins at the Hyatt Regency

By ERICKA SANTIAGO
Ericka_santiago@saipantribune.com
SALES ASSOCIATE

Switzerland-trained Denise Montenegro, also known as Seet Fah Wong, will be stepping into her new role as director of Human Resources at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

After 25 years working at Hyatt Regency Saipan in different capacities, Montenegro will be taking over the reins from long-time Hyatt HR director Josephine Mesta, who has retired.

Montenegro started as the room service and café supervisor at Hyatt in June of 1996. In 1997, she was promoted to Food and Beverage outlet manager up to 2003. After starting her family, she transferred to the Finance Department as an accountant from 2003 to 2004. In 2004, she transferred to Human Resources as the learning manager up to the present. One of the many responsibilities she had was conducting the orientation for newly hired employees and training them in their prospective departments. She also assists employees in advancing their skills and knowledge.

Montenegro is a Society of Human Resources Management Certified Professional (SHRM C-P) since 2018, and a Certified Hospitality Trainer (CHT-AHLEI) since 2013. She is currently the treasurer of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas SHRM chapter. Her promotion as director of Human Resources for Hyatt Regency Saipan took effect last Jan. 6, 2022.

Mesta is not worried about Montenegro stepping into her new role as they have worked alongside for many years, saying Montenegro went through years of preparation for her promotion. Mesta assigned different projects to her to help her familiarize herself with the work and what will be needed for her new position.

"She always told me to do the best of my abilities. It's a fact of life that we don't know everything. Based on what you know, do the best that you can," said Montenegro when asked about the best piece of advice she has gotten from Mesta.

Montenegro was born and raised in Malaysia and received her college diploma in 1992 from Institute Hotelier "Caesar Ritz" in Switzerland. She gained her F&B experience interning at Hotel Zur Krone, Winterthur, Switzerland, and Brasserie Lipp in Zurich, Switzerland. After receiving her diploma, Montenegro returned to Malysia to start her hotel career in 1992 as a waitress at the Taming Sari Grill Room at the Malacca Renaissance Hotel in Malaysia, then joined The Datai Langkawi as an assistant manager.

She says that one of Saipan's unique features as a destination is the island's natural beauty. "The scenery is breathtaking. We live here and take the ocean for granted. The natural beauty of the landscape and the unique culture—this is what makes Saipan different from the other places." She has a whole collection of photos dedicated to Saipan's sunsets.

Montenegro is married to James and they have two children, Amber, who is 21 years old, and Jett, who is 15. Her parents and sibling are still living in Malaysia.

ERICKA SANTIAGO
Switzerland-trained Denise Montenegro is the new director of Human Resources at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

IN APPRECIATION HANMI
The newly elected board of directors of the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands present a plaque of appreciation to outgoing chairwoman Gloria Cavanagh on Jan. 27, 2022, during the HANMI general membership meeting at Aqua Resort Club Saipan. From left, Pacific Islands Club Saipan general manager Dennis Seo, HANMI chairman and Century Hotel general manager Ivan Quichocho, HANMI legal counsel Marcia Schultz, Cavanagh, Hyatt Regency Saipan general manager Nick Nishikawa, and Kanoa Resort Saipan general manager Martin Jambor. Cavanagh has been appointed as vice president of Mariana E-Land Corp.

Free webinars on federal contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free live webinars this February.

Webinars run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

■ Feb. 3 - Applying for a DUNS & Registering in SAM - Vendors need a DUNS number and an active SAM registration to participate in Federal contracting. The Guam PTAC will take you through the registration processes for both these requirements. We will also show you how to complete the annual SAM registration renewal.

■ Feb. 10 - Federal Contract Opportunities - SAM.gov is the portal for Federal Contract Opportunities. The Guam PTAC will show you how to use the website to ensure you do not miss any opportunities. Types of opportunities, search filters, and search strategies will be discussed.

■ Feb. 17 - Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment - Department of Defense vendors use the Wide-Area Workflow module in the Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment system to create, submit, and track their invoices. We will show you how to setup an account and submit an invoice so you get paid on time.

■ Feb. 24 - Federal Contracting Responsibilities - Department of Defense vendors need to protect themselves from cyberattacks. We will discuss DOD's current requirements as well as the upcoming Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC 2.0).

To register, visit www.guamptac.com. ***(PR)***

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ATTORNEY FOR Petitioner

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Estate of JOSEPHA ARRIOLA TORRES, also known as JOSEFA ARRIOLA TORRES, Deceased.) CIVIL ATION NO. 22-0008

NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Rebecca C. White has filed a Petition for Letters Testamentary upon the Estate of the Josepha Arriola Torres, Decease; and that the said Petition will be heard by the Court on Thursday, February 24, 2022, at the hour of 10:00 a.m. of the said day.

Notice is also given to all heirs of and persons having claims against the Estate of Josepha Arriola Torres, Deceased, and to all persons claiming an interest in said Estate, that they shall file such claims with the Clerk of this Court within sixty (60) days from the date of first publication of this Notice. Copies of such claims should be provided to Michael A. White, Esq., The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, P.O. Box 5222 CHRB, Saipan, MP 96950, Attorney for Petitioner. All claims not so filed shall be forever barred.

DATED: 25 JANUARY 2022

/s/ Hon. JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM WEBSITE: HTTPS: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
"Car Rental Concession"
CPA-RFP-007-21
Request for Proposals
for: CPA Concession No. CRS-2021-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for a period of approximately two years (contract to end on 5/31/2024) upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-RFP-007-21 is **January 13, 2022**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of $100.00 (certified cashier's checks made out to Commonwealth Ports Authority) to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Chief Accountant – JMC-2022-01, Saipan, CNMI

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT,
Joeten Motor Company, Inc., Saipan, CNMI

Consolidate and Prepares company monthly departmental Financial Statements inconformity with general accepted accounting principle (GAAP) acceptable to United States, prepare company budget and monitoring budget versus actual expenses. Performs General Ledger posting, reconciliation, prepare balance sheet schedule on a monthly basis, such as preparation of Fixed assets lapsing schedule, pre-payments, accruals of expenses. Review and compiles Financial Statements for various individual and corporate clients in conformity with auditors requirements. Review and in-charge in the calculation of CNMI and federal government taxes on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis, Responds to CNMI Revenue and IRS letters and prepares necessary documents needed to correct and comply tax filing. In-charge in the cost accounting, accountable for the ongoing analysis of process constraints, target costing projects, margin analysis, and tracing costs back to underlying activities. The cost accountant must also construct and monitor those cost-effective data accumulation systems needed to provide an appropriate level of costing information to management. Coordinate physical inventory counts and cycle counts, Investigate cycle counting variances and resolve issues, Update standard costs in the bill of materials, Review standard and actual costs for inaccuracies, Validate the cost of goods sold as part of the month-end close, Accumulate and apply overhead costs as required by generally accepted accounting principles, Work with the materials review board to locate and dispose of obsolete inventory. Conduct ongoing process constraint analyses, Report on breakeven points by products, work centers, and factories, Report on margins by product and division, Report on periodic variances and their causes, focusing in particular on spending variances, Analyze capital budgeting requests, Perform cost accumulation tasks as a member of the target costing group. Prepares recommendations to the top management, with regards to meeting company budget, cost cutting measures, and help in the implementation of company set policies.

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Accounting, Finance, or related field, foreign educational equivalent accepted, plus 2 years experience in general accounting functions and 2 yrs experience in managerial position. Able to supervise accounting and administrative staff. Knowledge in preparing Consolidated Financial Statement in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principle (GAAP). Knowledge in local, state and federal tax preparation. Good oral and communication skills. Good interpersonal qualities.

Salary: $ 18.50 per hour.

Workplace: BEACH ROAD SAN JOSE VILLAGE, JOETEN MOTORS BUILDING Saipan, CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to Joeten Motor Company, Inc., PO BOX 500680, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to josephine_b@joetenmotors.com Job Number – **JMC-2022-01**

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

How to revive Build Back Better

The Democrats' enormous tax and spending package, known as Build Back Better, has stalled in Congress with little hope of recovery in its present form. President Joe Biden said last week that he'd settle for enacting as much of it as possible. If the administration is willing to prioritize and apply sound fiscal policy, the result could be a better bill—or bills—with every chance of passing.

Although BBB identifies real problems and offers promising solutions, it's expensive, complicated, and packed with budget gimmickry. A trimmed-down version, honestly accounted for, could improve on the original in crucial respects.

The plan's most urgent proposals are aimed at climate change. They include generous new support for investments in clean energy, carbon abatement, and climate resilience—all badly needed. The 10-year cost is some $555 billion, a huge outlay by past standards but modest measured against the gravity of the problem.

The reform also aims to cut child poverty and widen opportunity for low-income families. It includes a big one-year increase in the child tax credit, from $2,000 to $3,600 for children 5 or under and $3,000 for those between 6 and 17, and allows parents without taxable income to claim the full amount. The 10-year cost of those changes—calculated on a permanent rather than temporary basis, as it should be—would be $1.6 trillion.

Finally, the bill also provides access to more affordable child care and universal free preschool, at a 10-year cost, again on a permanent basis, of some $750 billion.

All three elements are both valuable on the merits and politically plausible. The problem is that a candid accounting of even this pared-back plan would necessitate more revenue than the original envisioned. To bridge the gap, Biden should suggest trimming some of the outlays and looking elsewhere for additional funds.

One option is to cut the cost of a permanent expansion of the child tax credit—by increasing the credits to (say) $3,000 and $2,500, lowering the income threshold at which the benefit starts to phase out, and making the payments partially rather than fully refundable. Together with other adjustments, this could be done at half the cost of the Build Back Better formula, while still significantly reducing child poverty.

Combined with the originally proposed revenue raisers—a 15% minimum tax on corporate book income, a surtax of 5% on people with incomes above $10 million a year and 8% above $25 million, an extension of the existing 3.8% investment tax to individuals' trade and business income, enhanced IRS enforcement, and more—this change to the child tax credit reform would be about enough to make the plan fully paid for.

Should those tweaks prove untenable, Biden has plenty of other options to consider. Moves toward carbon pricing and an outright carbon tax would strengthen the plan's finances while reinforcing the other climate-change initiatives.

See HOW on Next Page

Sanctions—truth or consequences

By MARTIN SCHRAM
Tribune News Service

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service*, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.*

It is time for President Joe Biden to use one countermeasure to Russia's military menace at the Ukraine border that he has so far failed to deploy. It's way past time, in fact.

But luckily there is still time for America's president to shift into his people gear and deliver a straight-talk message that can prove meaningful to its prime target—not Russia's president, but Russia's people.

So far, Biden has made clear in his public statements that if Russia invades Ukraine, the United States and its NATO allies will retaliate with "severe economic sanctions"—that's typical government-to-government dugout chatter. And when Biden has sought to humanize his threat, the human he chose was Putin: "He's never seen sanctions like the ones I promised will be imposed if he moves."

But what America's president and his speechwriters really haven't done is speak in terms that really speak to the ordinary Russians who will be their country's ultimate Russian victims if Putin invades Ukraine.

What America's president needs to do now is to start by channeling his inner Scranton Joe, yet again. He needs to talk to the same sort of folks halfway around the world that he has proved adept at reaching where they lived, here at home.

Biden's best and brightest can start by pondering what would be the dinner table conversation in the homes and apartments of Russia's families who are spread across their huge nation's 11 time zones. They're probably not talking about Ukraine. Most of them have never seen Ukraine, will never see Ukraine and frankly don't give a damn about Ukraine.

But they do care about the fact that they are already struggling to just barely make it in a weak economy. And they won't like anything their president does—such as invading Ukraine—if they later discover what he did just made their lives a lot tougher.

New polling this month by the Levada Center, an independent public opinion organization in Moscow, showed that almost half (47%) of Russians think the political situation is "tense" and 41% say the economic situation is "bad." Asked what they expect to happen in the next few months, more people answered negatively than positively: 49% expected economic deterioration, 44% expected political deterioration.

But the polls also show there is one thing on which Russians are not divided: Russians believe the United States and NATO are responsible for starting this Ukraine crisis. How can that be? Here's how: On Wednesday, the government news agency, Tass, reported to Russians that Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said: "The West, of course, is inflaming hysteria, evacuating (the diplomats). … About sanctions, we see that our Western colleagues are quite literally in a state of some militaristic frenzy."

Foil-check: Journalists know it was the Russia Embassy in Kyiv that began busing its personnel back to Moscow from Ukraine, well before the U.S. Embassy began evacuating. And of course the entire conflict originated when Russia blatantly sent its 120,000 troops to Ukraine's border in invasion posture.

No wonder talk about sanctions has become the West's only way to generate the sort of pressure and public opinion wave that even a dictator cannot simply ignore. And that brings us back to Scranton Joe.

Biden's best hope may be to lay out an information highway paved with hard truths and clear consequences. Russia's struggling families in cities, towns and rural lands need to know just what trouble they will face if Putin orders an invasion of Ukraine.

They must be told that the West will move as one to isolate Russia from the global economy. Russia will be disconnected from the world's banking and finance systems. Russia's corporations, companies, small businesses and consumers will no longer be able to do any of the dollar-based commerce and consuming they have long taken for granted.

Russia's families will find they can no longer get the things, large and small, they have always taken for granted. Oh, there will be workarounds: China may be able to come to Russia's economic rescue. Russia may be able to survive by becoming a dependent of the land they once considered their communist junior partner. But families will have to get used to living without the globally connected conveniences and comforts.

Putin's once-proud superpower will survive by adjusting to an existence as the world's largest banana republic, of sorts. Except with no bananas. But nuclear weapons by the bunch.

Or, Vladimir Putin can return to the presidential ways he once preferred—back when he was all set to host the 2014 G-8 economic summit at Sochi. Until it had to be canceled because, practically on the eve of the summit, Putin felt compelled to seize Crimea from Ukraine. Which caused the G-8 to blackball Russia. Which brought us to the mess we see today.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Vaccine-hesitant people can still change their minds. As a doctor, I'm seeing it happen

By PRABHAVA BAGLA
Los Angeles Times

Prabhava Bagla is a doctor of internal medicine in Orlando, Florida.

Last month, I saw an elderly patient with underlying chronic obstructive pulmonary disease who was admitted to the hospital with a bone stuck in his throat. He underwent endoscopic removal the same day; a routine pre-procedure COVID-19 test came back negative.

The next day, going over his discharge instructions, I asked if he was vaccinated against COVID-19 yet. He was not, and the room got awkwardly silent for a few seconds. But he followed up by asking if he could get his first dose now. It made me reflect on when I got vaccinated.

When COVID-19 vaccines first became available at my hospital in December 2020, I was not among those lining up to get a Pfizer or Moderna dose. I was one of the few doctors in our group exclusively seeing new COVID-19 admissions, yet I did not sign up for either opportunity.

I am not a vaccine skeptic and never have been. At that time, I was simply going to be out of town the first week shots became available, on a trip I could not have avoided even if I had more notice of when the vaccines would be ready. My wife was in her final year of residency in a different state, and my monthly weeklong visits were the only time we got to be together. I was observing all other COVID-19 precautions, wearing a mask everywhere, liberally using hand sanitizer and, besides visiting my wife, social distancing to the point of isolation.

To see her, I drove 1,000 miles each way, every trip accomplished in a single day to avoid staying at a hotel. My trips were too precious to move even for the vaccine, and besides, I wasn't sure then if there would be adequate supply for the second dose.

I imagine that if I had gotten sick, I would've been classified as one of the anti-vaxxers who didn't trust the science and was part of the problem. Fortunately, I didn't get sick and was fully vaccinated by mid-February. I have since gotten a booster and do not intend to drop precautions like masks any time soon. The pandemic continues unabated, with the omicron variant accounting for an estimated 59% of sequenced COVID-19 cases in the U.S. as of last week.

It is easy to assume every unvaccinated person is set in their ways. Some people may very well be, but even now there are many people on the brink of getting the vaccine —like me at the end of 2020 when travel plans got in the way, or like my patient earlier this month who just needed me to ask.

My patient said that he had been trying to stay home as much as possible. With his son and daughter-in-law in a different city, he would have needed an Uber to get to a vaccination appointment, and he was afraid of catching COVID-19 in the process of trying to prevent it. One of his friends, he said, had just left the hospital after spending two months there battling COVID-19.

My patient was doing what he could to protect himself and not be a burden on his family. I ordered him a dose of his preferred vaccine and provided information on an appointment for his next dose. I hope he keeps it.

The federal government estimates that just 62% of adults are fully vaccinated, and 73.3% have gotten their first dose. With COVID-19 cases again rising during a winter surge sparked by the omicron variant, improving those numbers still counts. Organizations including the Cleveland Clinic and the American Medical Assn. have shared tips on talking with friends, family members or patients who may be vaccine-hesitant, emphasizing that we need to understand people's doubts and counter misinformation.

When I see future unvaccinated patients, I will steer clear of assumptions and talk with them —and their family members — about their choices. These conversations may not always be easy to initiate, but more discussion and understanding could still help save lives.

Bad news for election integrity

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF
The Dallas Morning News

Carl P. Leubsdorf is the former Washington bureau chief of the Dallas Morning News*. Readers may write to him via email at: carl.p.leubsdorf@gmail.com.*

The last week has been discouraging for the increasing number of Americans concerned about maintaining the integrity of elections.

That's because of the way leaders of both parties have exacerbated, by word and deed, both the substance and perception of current federal and state voting problems.

The only current bright spot is the possibility that lawmakers will yet act in one key area—to prevent a repetition of last January's near disaster when supporters of Donald Trump tried to prevent congressional certification of the 2020 election results.

That action is long overdue. But it won't fully compensate for the ways the current situation is being made worse, not better. Here are three recent examples:

■ The Senate's refusal to act on two far-ranging election reform bills passed earlier by the House: the Freedom to Vote Act, providing uniform online registration, curbs on congressional gerrymandering and voting guidelines for the states, and the bill named for civil rights icon John Lewis, restoring the Voting Rights Act's federal review powers prematurely terminated by the Supreme Court.

The main onus here is on Senate Republicans who refused to consider any aspects of the measure. But the situation was hardly helped by the resistance of moderate Democrats Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona to rules changes to facilitate action they claimed to favor.

■ President Joe Biden's unfortunate comments questioning the integrity of the 2022 elections if Congress fails to pass the two election reform measures. The White House later withdrew them but given Trump's repeated questioning of the 2020 election's fairness, the last thing Americans need is for the leaders of both parties -- admittedly for different reasons -- casting broad doubt about election integrity.

Their reasons are parallel, though different. Trump's unproven contentions of fraud, which have undermined GOP confidence in the voting system, stem mainly from objections to expanding voting, largely through relaxing absentee ballot rules. Biden's concerns stem from the federal failure to curb state restrictions that critics contend would reduce voting by minorities.

■ One negative impact of the new Texas election law was evident when several large counties rejected hundreds of applications for mail ballots on technical grounds like failure to include proper ID numbers. It prompted 10 Texas House members to urge the Justice Department to monitor the situation.

This is exactly the kind of problem Democratic opponents warned about when the new laws were passed. Both the new restrictions—and the secretary of state's "audit" under pressure from Trump—are aimed at large metropolitan counties where increased minority populations have swelled Democratic turnouts.

Interestingly, both blocked Senate voting bills are popular with the public. Morning Consult polling in Politico's Playbook showed a majority favor the broader measure's key provisions: expanding same-day registration, early voting, and voting by mail; automatic voter registration; prohibiting partisan gerrymandering; and making Election Day a federal holiday.

Similarly, a poll last fall by Navigator Research, a project of several progressive political organizations, showed that more than two-thirds back the voting rights bill, including half of Republicans.

Unfortunately, majority public support doesn't mean majority Senate support, where the Republicans' 50% represents well under half of the American people.

Meanwhile, members of both parties are showing increased interest in amending the flawed 1887 Electoral Count Act.

They hope to prevent a repetition of what happened last January when Trump sought to pressure Vice President Mike Pence to ignore some state electoral vote certificates, a rampaging mob overran the marble halls of Congress, and dozens of Republican lawmakers signed onto Trump's false claims of election fraud in seeking to prevent Congress form certifying Biden's victory.

One goal would be to make clear that, in presiding over the joint session that counts the electoral votes, the vice president's role is totally ceremonial.

Trump and his allies argued (but Pence rejected) that the vice president has discretion in deciding any challenged electoral votes. In fact, it's up to the House and Senate members themselves.

Another useful change would be to amend the provision allowing the objections of a single senator and a single representative to force a debate and vote on accepting a state's electoral votes. Members of both parties have taken advantage of that provision in recent certification sessions.

It should be strengthened to require objections from a substantial portion of members, perhaps one third of both the Senate and the House. Last year, only a handful of senators joined a majority of House Republicans in forcing debates and votes on the electoral votes of Arizona and Pennsylvania.

Another useful change would limit challenges to situations with at least two legitimate claims to a state's electors. In their zeal to overturn the popular results, the Trump campaign apparently drafted fraudulent statements from GOP electors in seven states, contending that Trump carried those states when in fact he lost.

Both Biden and Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell have expressed openness recently toward doing something. Most importantly, a bipartisan group headed by Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins is working on the issue, raising hopes any revision could attract the 60 Senate votes needed to pass.

Still, even if Congress fixes this ambiguous law, public confidence in the nation's electoral system will remain in doubt if top leaders from both parties continue to question it.

HOW

From Page 6

Keeping the deduction for state and local taxes capped at $10,000 would raise hundreds of billions of dollars, largely from the better-off. Reviving a shamefully discarded proposal to close one of the stupidest loopholes in the tax code—the treatment of capital gains at death—would raise upward of $200 billion over 10 years.

A sharper focus on getting taxpayers value for their money would be welcome too. For example, confining an enhanced subsidy for clean electric vehicles to EVs built in the U.S. with union labor is counterproductive. Ideally, this and other accommodations to the Democrats' political allies should be dropped.

The main thing is this: The most valuable parts of Build Back Better can be recast in a simpler and more fiscally responsible form. The new plan would still be ambitious by any standard, but it would look better to the moderate Democrats who balked at the original, and perhaps to a few open-minded Republicans as well. It would certainly make a lot more sense to voters—which means it would also stand a better chance of actually becoming law.

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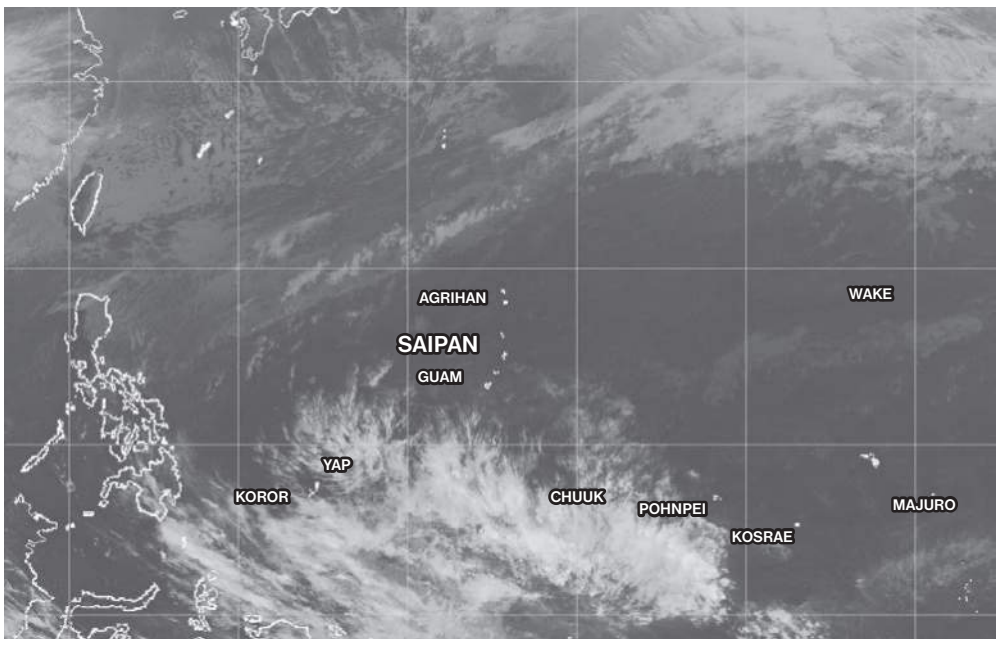
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers.
85º 76º	85º 75	86º 75º	86º 75º	86º 75º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:47 AM, MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

The morning satellite and radar imagery showed only a few clouds and showers over the Marianas.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	29 / 25 °F
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F
Yap	Isolated Thunderstorms	29 / 25 °F
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	29 / 26 °F
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	30 / 26 °F
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	30 / 27 °F
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	29 / 26 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:46 AM	18:15 PM
Wednesday	06:45 AM	18:15 PM
Thursday	06:45 AM	18:15 PM
Friday	06:45 AM	18:16 PM
Saturday	06:45 AM	18:16 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	06:41	18:17 PM	-
Wednesday	07:34	19:19 PM	-
Thursday	08:21	20:17 PM	-
Friday	09:04	21:12 AM	-
Saturday	09:43	22:03 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Cloudy/Wind	24 / 20 °F
Beijing	Sunny	3 / -9 °F
Hong Kong	Shower	15 / 14 °F
Honolulu	Sunny	27 / 21 °F
London	Cloudy	14 / 10 °F
Los Angeles	AM Clouds/PM Sun	18 / 7 °F
Manila	Partly Cloud	29 / 25°F
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	23 / 14 °F
Miami	Mostly Sunny	2 / 0 °F
New York	Mostly Sunny	-1 / -6°F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	10 / 3 °F
Paris	Showers	11 / 10 °F
Busan	Partly Cloudy	8 / 1 °F
Rome	Sunny	14 / 1 °F
Salem	Sunny	18 / 7 °F
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	15 / 8 °F
Seoul	AM Snow Showers	2 / -10 °F
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	10 / 2 °F
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	6 / -1 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
01:39 AM	Low Tide	-0.82
08:49 AM	High Tide	1.83
2:10 PM	Low Tide	1.05
7:03 PM	High Tide	1.91

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 23, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

A117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1,3,5,7
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 2)
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 2)
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	6

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2,4,6,7
UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	Every 4 (Jan 29-Mar 2)
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

X622	8:00AM	1:10PM	6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

CELEBRATING HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR 2022

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FEBRUARY 1, 2022

Lunar new year rituals from around the world

By MINHAE SHIM ROTH
GOODHOUSEKEEPING.COM

While people around the globe welcome the new year by counting down to midnight on December 31, members of Asian communities also celebrate new beginnings during Lunar New Year, which begins on Feb. 1 in 2022. While Lunar New Year is commonly referred to as Chinese New Year, the holiday—which spans the first 15 days of the first month of the lunar calendar—is also celebrated across Asia and Southeast Asia in countries like Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines, Tibet, Mongolia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. China's Lunar New Year is known as the Spring Festival or Chúnjié in Mandarin, while Korea calls it Seollal and Vietnam refers to it as Tét.

Asian Americans in the U.S. celebrate Lunar New Year in their own ways, mixing traditions from the East and West to satisfy our unique cultural identities. While traveling and spending time with friends and family is at the heart of Lunar New Year, with the pandemic, many are celebrating with their loved ones virtually and navigating the time differences over FaceTime, KakaoTalk, WeChat and Zoom. Whether you're an immigrant, Asian American or an ally, take Lunar New Year as an opportunity to reaffirm your goals and recharge your hopeful energy for the coming year. After all, Lunar New Year is about starting on a clean slate, cleansing the negative and welcoming the positive, and setting intentions for a prosperous, lucky and fulfilling year—and who doesn't need some extra positive vibes in this year of the Tiger?

What are the traditions of Lunar New Year?

Each country and every individual celebrate Lunar New Year a little bit differently with distinctive traditions, foods and festivities, but here are a few you might experience.

Cleaning house

It makes sense to welcome in a new era with a cleanse, and those who celebrate Lunar New Year often prepare for the holiday by literally

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LUNAR

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cleaning every corner of their house, or at least trying to. Dr. Jianguo Chen, an associate professor of Chinese at the University of Delaware, says, "It is customary for people to completely clean their houses to get rid of bad fortune from the old year." In China, after cleaning, people decorate their houses with the color red in forms like festive scrolls, folk painting, paper-cuts, and lanterns. "Bright red is the preeminent color of festivity, symbolic of good health and fortune, wealth, prosperity and longevity," he says.

Offering greetings

While we greet people in January with a basic "Happy New Year" in the U.S., various Asian countries have different sayings in their respective languages. In Korea, to honor elders, people say "Saehae bok mani badeuseyo," which means, "Please receive a lot of good fortune for the New Year." Chen says that in China, people greet each other with phrases like "Gông xi fá cái" in Mandarin and "Gung hei faat coi" in Cantonese, which mean "Wishing you a happy and prosperous Chinese New Year." In Vietnam, people say, "Chúc múng nám môi," which simply means "Happy New Year" in Vietnamese.

Gathering with family

Like any other major holiday, Lunar New Year is a time to be with your loved ones, and for many, it is the one time a year they travel back to see their families. "Typically, on the first day of the festival, people would pay a visit to their elderly and respected by offering good wishes," says Chen. Travel guides often warn of congested streets and overbooked international flights during the period. Coming from different parts of the globe, several generations of family gather to eat the family reunion dinner, catch up, and reminisce during Lunar New Year.

Giving and receiving red envelops

Nothing signifies Lunar New Year more in pop culture than little red envelopes adorned in gold and stuffed with cash. During a visit to older relatives, people are usually gifted money in these red envelopes, known as Hóng báo in China. In the Philippines, the red envelopes are called Ang Pao and Vietnam calls them "Li xi," or "lucky money." In Korea, however, money from the elders called sae bae don, translated as "new year's money," is usually given not in red but in white or patterned envelopes.

Buying new clothes

To refresh the wardrobe and prep to impress the grandparents, people who celebrate Lunar New Year will sometimes purchase and wear new traditional clothing. In Korea, people wear traditional garb called Hanbok for formal occasions and holidays, including Lunar New Year. Women's Hanbok consists of a long skirt and a short jacket in colorful patterns and lustrous materials. In China, women can wear Qípáo or Cheongsam, a high-necked and often short-sleeved dress, for the holiday.

Attending a lantern festival

In China, Lunar New Year ends with the Lantern Festival, a celebration that includes folk dancing, traditional games, lantern parades, and dragon and lion dances. People also eat glutinous rice balls called Yuánxiáo or Tángyuán, which are sweet treats with various fillings like black sesame, peanuts, red bean, rose petals, and rock sugar. According to Chen, in China, the Lantern Festival is sometimes known as China's Valentine's Day, where singles hope to meet their new flame. He says, "Needless to say, setting off firecrackers is an important part of the Chinese New Year and also of the Lantern Festival."

What foods are traditionally eaten for Lunar New Year?

"Holidays are about eating, and the Spring Festival [in China] is particularly so," says Chen. You might see:

Dumplings

While some associate moon cakes with Lunar New Year, the delicacy is actually used for the Mid-Autumn Festival. Dumplings, or Jiáozi in Mandarin, are a staple for Lunar New Year celebrations. "Since the shape of Jiáozi looks like gold ingots used as currency in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), eating Jiáozi, so it was believed folklorically, would bring prosperity," says Chen. "Some parents would even hide a big clean coin inside a Jiáozi for the lucky kid to find as a table game on Chinese New Year's Eve."

Rice Cake Soup

For Seollal, Korea's Lunar New Year, Koreans eat Tteokguk, literally translated as "rice cake soup." The savory soup is made with thin disk-shaped rice cakes that resemble coins, which symbolize prosperity. In Korea, they say you get one year older when you eat a bowl of rice cake soup. The dish, which is made with water, small chunks of beef, green onion, egg, and rice cakes, is predominantly white in color, which signifies purity and new beginnings.

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Forecast for the year of the Water Tiger

By DATO' JOEY YAP
NEWS.YAHOO.COM

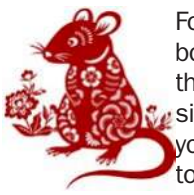
Every year, about a quarter of the planet celebrates a special day called the Spring Festival. You might know this day better as the Chinese New Year. However, the significance of this celebration goes beyond the arrival of a new year.

Instead, it is also believed that each year has its own form of vibrational energy that can affect one's luck for better or worse. In 2022, we will be entering the Water Tiger year, which affects you more than you may realize.

But not to worry, here are some valuable insights that'll help you anticipate the challenges and opportunities coming your way this year and how you can use them to your advantage!

RAT

They say tough times build character; 2022 will be the year to be put to the test.



For those born under this animal sign, it is your year to prove your worth in terms of independence, self-assurance and self-reliance. So rise up to the occasion and take what's given to you with stride.

While awareness of what's coming is one factor to take note of, another key to turning this year around for the better would be to seek internal strength. Get in touch with your spiritual side so you'll have the peace of mind and clarity to overcome the challenges ahead. Learn to see things as they are.

Health-wise, it goes without saying that the stress and fatigue would accumulate over a year. Therefore, the spiritual aspect can also help abate this issue. Make a conscious effort to give yourself a break from time to time. Always remember to be kind to yourself.

OX

If your animal sign is the Ox,

you should be focusing on relationships this year. As they say, no man is an island. As human beings, we rely on one another for our various needs and wants. So 2022 is a great year for you to make new connections and strengthen pre-existing ones.

Where your career is concerned, wealth opportunities await you, and it is reachable through networking. Remember, people like happy people. So rather than waiting for external circumstances to come and make you happy, find reasons to be happy internally, and everything will fall into place.

However, one thing to note is the quality of people

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you meet. Being a networking year for you, it's inevitable that you might meet one or two bad apples. But don't let their negativity get to you or affect your mental health when that happens. There are plenty of other people deserving of your time and attention.

TIGER

As the Grand Duke of the year, all eyes will be on you. You'll want to be prepared for your moment in the spotlight to ensure you'll be the breakout star of the year. That means steering clear of distractions and focusing on improving your knowledge and skills. Your efforts will be noticed, especially at work.

It'll take a while for the growth in your career to show itself as returns in your personal wealth. So don't count your chickens before they hatch and spend money that hasn't made its way to your wallet. Instead, create a sustainable budget for the year and set aside some cash savings for a rainy day.

You'll want to do some planning when it comes to your relationships as well. With all these new demands on your time and attention, your relationships may inadvertently end up suffering as they're pushed to the back seat. To ensure a balanced life, schedule time in your day to spend time with your loved ones. After all, your star will shine brighter with a good supporting cast.

RABBIT

Rabbits can rejoice after a challenging 2021 as 2022 is the year you'll receive plenty of support for every move you make. Help will flow in from every corner as long as you're clear about your goals and are spotted actively working towards them.

This makes it the perfect year to start a business, as the partnerships you form and the people you hire are likely to be particularly capable and helpful this year. It's your opportunity to build a strong foundation that will carry your business through both easy and tough years.

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If you're an employee, things are looking up as well. Put in a good performance, and you'll be rewarded with a promotion - especially if your boss is male. Your prowess at work may even attract a partner - an office romance is in the cards if you're up for it. Alternatively, the people around you will also be playing matchmaker. So ensure you're up for all the excitement this year has to offer by keeping physically and mentally fit- that's where your main challenges lie this year.

DRAGON

This year promises to be one of self-reflection for the Dragon. The challenges you meet this year will open the door to deep realizations about yourself and your direction in life. So don't dismiss these big questions; they'll lead the way to discover your true self and develop a truly unshakeable spirit.

You'll have the capacity for all this deep thinking because things will proceed smoothly when it comes to your finances and career. As long as you've done your homework, you can expect steady growth in your investments and work.

However, your relationships will take a step back this year. This especially applies if you're single - chances are slim if you're seeking a new partner. Those already married will enjoy a stable marriage, but don't expect excitement as it's likely that your partners can't give you their full attention this year. That's alright - it will leave you with more time for the self-reflection that will lead to your major personal breakthrough.

SNAKE

2022 is looking to be an inspirational year for those born under the Snake animal sign. When you're inspired, it's not difficult to find the motivation to take action that can create a positive impact in your life. When matched with the right action and mindset, this could be the year where you'll gain significant wealth.

In terms of your career, you will definitely see some opportunities to show your worth. However, if you decide to take this head-on, it's your chance to showcase your talents. This, in turn, will open the doors to more opportunities and the likelihood for you to meet mentors who can take you a step further.

Love might not be something to prioritize this year, but it's definitely worth keeping an eye on. In your newfound independence, you might potentially neglect those close to you. As such, try to make it a habit to stay in touch with them from time to time and spare a thought whenever you can.

HORSE

Your wealth luck looks good in 2022. If you're planning to expand your business, the outcome is favorable, and there may be an unexpected windfall. If you're an employee, you will find yourself flourishing in your field this year.

You'll find yourself more motivated and energized to accomplish your goals, and your efforts and hard work finally pay off. In addi-

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To our Korean friends and families, the New Year brings lots of positive hope, spirits, and wishes for a prosperous year.
Happy Seollal
2022
福
Enjoy the New Year and stay safe.
David M. Apatang, Mayor of Saipan & Staff

FORECAST

From Page 14

tion, you'll be handsomely rewarded.

Your love luck is on the average side as you'll be focusing more on work than anything else. Therefore, it's best to strike a work-life balance and spend any available time with your partner while cherishing the moment.

Health-wise, your physical health is also good, but the same cannot be said for your emotional and spiritual wellbeing. But don't worry, with the proper care and lifestyle adjustments, you can overcome these problems.

GOAT

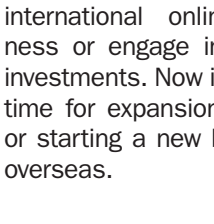
Your wealth would double this year for those born under the Goat animal sign. However, windfalls don't just happen with you doing nothing about it. For example, if you're in sales, you'll need to work for your money. Expand your contacts to gain support from your loyal clients or customers. Just stay clear of any unnecessary spending and continue to manage your finances wisely.

In terms of career, your efforts will bear fruit in 2022, and you could gain the chance for a promotion and raise. In addition, there'll be no shortages of helpful people around you who are willing to get you out of trouble if need be. It's not a suitable year to switch jobs, though, if you're planning to do so.

For those of you in a relationship and wanting to tie the knot, this will be an excellent year to do it. Your general health outlook is positive, and as for those that have been feeling under the weather on and off, you may find yourself recovering completely.

MONKEY

This year will be challenging where wealth is concerned. There'll be monetary losses or excessive spending. However, if you're a business owner, start an international online business or engage in foreign investments. Now is a great time for expansion, growth or starting a new business overseas.



And suppose you're aspiring to become a Key Opinion Leader or simply want to garner more viewers and engagement to your social media platforms. In that case, 2022 will be a good year to jumpstart your online career as you'll have the ability to do so, and your popularity could be off the charts.

Your health may not be at its best. Be careful when driving as there might be accidents. Relationship-wise, it may be challenging for you this year as you'll be dealing with some conflicts and maybe an emotional betrayal.

ROOSTER

In 2022, you'll be sought after as you'll gain the knack for problem-solving and turning unexpected situations favorable for you and others. But, on the other hand, there'll be those around you who'll thoroughly guide you and help you see the opportunities that are coming your way.

If you're ready to make a career shift, don't be afraid to take that leap of faith. Just make sure before you leave, do the proper handover to avoid official or personal disputes with your ex-colleagues.

Your wealth luck looks promising, especially for those in sales, real estate or law. There'll be an increase in opportunities offered to you, and your network of clients will grow. However, you may face some unexpected illness this year. So, be wary of your diet.

For those who are single, pay close attention to those around you in the office this year as you might find 'the one. And if you're married, patience and honest communication are critical this year.

DOG

This year you'll get creative with everything you do, and it will be extra beneficial for those in the creative field. There'll also be career advancement and pursuit towards your professional interest. So, remember to flex those creative muscles, and you'll start bringing in the money in 2022.

Watch your spending and only buy the things you need. For business owners or entrepreneurs, be careful with your investments as there may be monetary losses. Also, be wary of your health as you tend to get hurt easily. And if you're single, this year you'll take your time to find love.

PIG

In 2022, there'll be opportunities to boost not only your network but also connect and nurture new relationships and gain new wisdom from helpful people. There'll also be a chance for promotion and salary increment.

On the other hand, to reduce excessive money outflow for you this year, it's recommended that you learn about financial management. 2022 is also a year of moderation where your health is concerned. Don't overindulge, keep a healthy diet and stay away from snacking, drinking or smoking too much.

Relationship-wise, the Peach Blossom Luck is on your side, and this will be a great year for you to meet someone you like. Also, it's a year to make many happy memories with loved ones, friends and colleagues.

10 Chinese New Year superstitions

Whether you believe it or not, here are some superstitions to ponder.

Don't sweep or take out garbage. The idea here is that if you do this on New Year's Day, you'll be sweeping wealth away or taking good fortune out of the house by taking out the garbage.

Use your words wisely. Refrain from swear words or arguing. Speak of prosperity and good luck so that more of that will be welcome in the upcoming year.

Avoid washing hair and getting a haircut. It is seen as "washing one's fortune away" at the beginning of the year. Get a new haircut or get a new hairstyle before Chinese New Year for a new look and start in the upcoming year.

Along with no hair washing, don't wash clothes. According to Chinese lore, to wash clothes is regarded as disrespect to the god of water. Wait three days after the new year to do your laundry.

Avoid using scissors or knives as they are sharp and believed to "cut ties" with friends and family.

When giving red envelopes containing money to children, make sure the amount is even. Chinese believe even numbers are lucky. The only exception to this rule is unlucky numbers such as 4 and 40 because the number 4 sounds like the word "death" in Chinese.

Wear red because it's vibrant and the same color as the envelopes that contain money. Avoid wearing white as it represents mourning or death.

Chinese believe wearing new clothes and shoes will symbolize wealth and abundance in the upcoming year. Consequently, if purchasing a new outfit is not within your budget, avoid wearing damaged clothes as they symbolize "rags."

Avoid lending and borrowing money.

Avoid visiting hospitals.

Chinese horoscopes

While growing up, the fun part was reading about the various traits of each animal associated with our birth year. The zodiac animal is oftentimes used to assess the future of a child born during that year. Similar to Western astrology, horoscopes also exist for the Chinese zodiac.

Rat (1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020) - quick-witted, resourceful, flexible, smart.

Ox (1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, 2021) - hardworking, dependable, strong, determined, thrifty.

Tiger (1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010, 2022) - brave, confident, versatile.

Rabbit (1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011, 2023) - quiet, kind, homebody.

Dragon (1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012, 2024) - confident, temperamental, powerful.

Snake (1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, 2025) – charming, wise, intelligent.

Horse (1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, 2026) – freedom-loving, spirited, independent.

Goat (1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015, 2027) – gentle, quiet, empathetic.

Monkey (1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028) – quick-witted, sharp, natural.

Rooster (1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017, 2029) – likes being the center of attention, outgoing, observant, speaks the mind.

Dog (1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018, 2030) – loyal, diligent, adventurous.

Pig (1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019, 2031) – thoughtful, generous, soft-spoken. ***(www.cincinnati.com/)***

2022
Happy Lunar New Year!
May this new year bring prosperity, good health, and success to everyone.
Tan Holdings
HEALTH IS WEALTH
Tan Siu Lin Foundation

Business

More cyberattacks targeting pandemic-weary US schools

AP

Art teacher Sarah Hager works at a computer in her classroom at Cleveland Middle School on Sunday, Jan. 23, 2022, in Albuquerque, N.M.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)—For teachers at a middle school in New Mexico's largest city, the first inkling of a widespread tech problem came during an early morning staff call.

On the video, there were shout-outs for a new custodian for his hard work, and the typical announcements from administrators and the union rep. But in the chat, there were hints of a looming crisis. Nobody could open attendance records, and everyone was locked out of class rosters and grades.

Albuquerque administrators later confirmed the outage that blocked access to the district's student database—which also includes emergency contacts and lists of which adults are authorized to pick up which children—was due to a ransomware attack.

"I didn't realize how important it was until I couldn't use it," said Sarah Hager, a Cleveland Middle School art teacher.

Cyberattacks like the one that canceled classes for two days in Albuquerque's biggest school district have become a growing threat to U.S. schools, with several high-profile incidents reported since last year. And the coronavirus pandemic has compounded their effects: More money has been demanded, and more schools have had to shut down as they scramble to recover data or even manually wipe all laptops.

"Pretty much any way that you cut it, incidents have both been growing more frequent and more significant," said Doug Levin, director of the K12 Security Information Exchange, a Virginia-based nonprofit that helps schools defend against cybersecurity risk.

Precise data is hard to come by since most schools are not required to publicly report cyberattacks. But experts say public school systems—which often have limited budgets for cybersecurity expertise—have become an inviting target for ransomware gangs.

The pandemic also has forced schools to turn increasingly toward virtual learning, making them more dependent on technology and more vulnerable to cyber-extortion. School systems that have had instruction disrupted include those in Baltimore County and Miami-Dade County, along with districts in New Jersey, Wisconsin and elsewhere.

FAA clears Verizon, AT&T to turn on more 5G towers

Federal safety regulators say they have cleared the way for Verizon and AT&T to power up more towers for new 5G service without causing radio interference with airplanes.

The Federal Aviation Administration said Friday that it took the steps after receiving details from the telecommunications companies about the location of wireless transmitters.

The FAA's move will let the companies activate 5G cell towers closer to airports without hindering the ability of planes to land during poor weather.

Verizon and AT&T declined to comment. Nick Ludlum, a spokesman for the telecommunications trade group CTIA, called it a "positive development that highlights the considerable progress the wireless industry, aviation industry, FAA and FCC are making to ensure robust 5G service and safe flights."

The trade group Airlines for America issued a similar statement. Spokesman Carter Yang added that all sides are working on "a more efficient permanent solution" that will avoid disrupting air traffic as more 5G towers are activated.

Aviation groups and the FAA had warned that the companies' 5G service, which uses part of the radio spectrum called C-Band, was too close to the spectrum range used by instruments that measure the height of planes above the ground—crucial information for landing in low visibility.

Verizon and AT&T, which spent billions to build 5G networks, disputed the FAA's conclusions. But they twice agreed to delay launching new 5G and temporarily delayed it around many airports even as they began offering the service in many U.S. cities on Jan. 19.

Since the dispute came to a head earlier this month, the FAA has cleared most types of airline planes—90% of the U.S. fleet—to operate around 5G signals, saying that their height-measuring devices, called radio altimeters, are safe from radio interference.

Dire predictions of thousands of canceled flights did not come true, but dozens of flights have been grounded by 5G concerns, including U.S.-bound international flights last week and some domestic flights this week at Paine Field near Seattle. Some small airline planes, notably a group of Embraer regional jets, have not been cleared. ***(AP)***

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

After the blizzard, the East Coast digs out under sunny sky

BOSTON (AP)—The sun shone down on much of the East Coast on Sunday, a day after a vicious nor'easter brought blizzard conditions to many areas, and left more than 100,000 customers without power for a stretch that could last into Monday. Winds that had gusted to more than 80 mph on Saturday died down on Sunday, and temperatures climbed into the upper teens and 20s as people emerged from their homes to dig out. The storm dumped snow from Virginia to Maine, but Massachusetts bore the brunt of the fury, with the neighboring towns of Sharon and Stoughton getting more than 30 inches (76 centimeters) of snow. More than 100,000 lost power at the height of the storm, mostly in Massachusetts. That had dropped to about 35,000 by Sunday afternoon, mostly on hard-hit Cape Cod. No other states reported widespread outages. Utility Eversource said Sunday it had 1,700 crews working to restore electricity in Massachusetts, and customers will have their power back on "by the end of the day Monday, with most before then."

Biden calls for release of US hostage in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden on Sunday called for the release of U.S. Navy veteran Mark Frerichs, who was taken hostage in Afghanistan nearly two years ago. Frerichs, a civil engineer and contractor from Lombard, Illinois, was kidnapped in January 2020 from the capital of Kabul. He is believed to be in the custody of the Taliban-linked Haqqani network. "Threatening the safety of Americans or any innocent civilians is always unacceptable, and hostage-taking is an act of particular cruelty and cowardice," President Joe Biden said in a statement to mark the second anniversary of the kidnapping on Monday. "The Taliban must immediately release Mark before it can expect any consideration of its aspirations for legitimacy. This is not negotiable."

US pledges to put Russia on defensive at UN Security Council

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. worked Sunday to ramp up diplomatic and financial pressure on Russia over Ukraine, promising to put Moscow on the defensive at the U.N. Security Council as lawmakers on Capitol Hill said they were nearing agreement on "the mother of all sanctions." The American ambassador to the United Nations said the Security Council will press Russia hard in a Monday session to discuss its massing of troops near Ukraine and fears it is planning an invasion. "Our voices are unified in calling for the Russians to explain themselves," Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said of the U.S. and the other council members on ABC's "This Week." "We're going into the room prepared to listen to them, but we're not going to be distracted by their propaganda."

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

In Loving Memory

†VICENTA SANTOS MUNA SABLAN

We, the family of the late +Vicenta Santos Muna Sablan would like to invite our relatives and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the First Death Anniversary of her passage unto eternal life.

Daily Mass is being offered at the San Antonio church on the following dates:

- February 01, 2022 thru February 05, 2022, February 08, 2022, and on February 09, 2022 (Final day) - 6:00 p.m.
- Sunday (February 06, 2022) - 7:00 a.m.
- Monday (February 07, 2022) - 5:30 p.m. at the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery

Your presence and prayers are greatly appreciated.

THANK YOU AND SI YU'US MA'ASE

Jose P. Sablan & Family

World

Rain-fed landslides, flooding kill at least 19 in Brazil

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP)— Landslides and flooding caused by heavy rains killed at least 19 people in Brazil's most populous state Sunday while high waters forced some 500,000 families from their homes over the weekend, authorities said.

Three people from the same family died when a landslide destroyed their house in the city of Embu das Artes, according to the municipal government, while four other people were rescued by firemen.

Four children died in Francisco Morato, Sao Paulo state Gov. João Doria said, and the state government said four other people died in Franco da Rocha. Deaths also were reported in Ribeirão Preto and Jaú.

Three of the deaths involved people who were swept away by flood waters, the state fire department said.

Doria used a helicopter to survey damaged areas on Sunday and announced the equivalent of $2.8 million in financial aid to affected cities.

Overflowing rivers forced 500,000 families to leave their homes, the state government said. Several roads and highways were blocked.

Because of disruptions caused by the rain, the city of Sao Paulo canceled scheduled vaccinations against the coronavirus.

Southeastern Brazil has been punished with heavy rains since the start of the year, with 19 deaths recorded in Minas Gerais state earlier this month.

WORLD BRIEFS

UAE intercepts Yemen missile as Israeli president visits

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United Arab Emirates intercepted a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels early Monday as the Israeli president visited the country, authorities said, the third such attack in recent weeks. The attack amid President Isaac Herzog's visit only fuels the ongoing tensions affecting the wider Persian Gulf, which has seen a series of attacks as Iran's nuclear deal with world powers collapsed and Yemen's yearslong war raged. As negotiators in Vienna now attempt to save the accord and Emirati-backed forces press on the Houthis, the rebels are launching their longest-range attacks yet. Those assaults represent a major challenge for the Emirates, which long has advertised itself to international businesses as a safe corner of an otherwise-dangerous neighborhood. The UAE's state-run WAM news agency reported the interception, saying that "the attack did not result in any losses, as the remnants of the ballistic missile fell outside the populated areas." It wasn't immediately clear where the missile remnants fell.

UN: Over 100 ex-Afghan forces, officials slain since August

UNITED NATIONS (AP)— The United Nations has received "credible allegations" that more than 100 former members of the Afghan government, its security forces and those who worked with international troops have been killed since the Taliban took over the country Aug. 15, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says. In a report obtained Sunday by The Associated Press, Guterres said that "more than two-thirds" of the victims were alleged to result from extrajudicial killings by the Taliban or its affiliates, despite the Taliban's announcement of "general amnesties" for those affiliated with the former government and U.S.-led coalition forces. The U.N. political mission in Afghanistan also received "credible allegations of extrajudicial killings of at least 50 individuals suspected of affiliation with ISIL-KP," the Islamic State extremist group operating in Afghanistan, Guterres said in the report to U.N. Security Council.

Weather, cleanup keep oil slick away from Thai resort island

RAYONG, Thailand (AP)— Favorable wind and sea conditions kept an oil slick away from beaches in eastern Thailand on Sunday, according to authorities, but concerns remained that the spillage may yet strike a popular resort island. Emergency workers in protective gear removed contaminated sand from the Mae Ramphueng beach in Rayong province, southeast of Bangkok, which was shut on Saturday. Some 20-50 tons of oil are estimated to have leaked Tuesday night in the Gulf of Thailand from an undersea hose used to load tankers at an offshore mooring point owned by the Star Petroleum Refining Co. The leak was stopped within hours, the company said.

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
RFP NO.: ITB22-BECQR-42200068

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2022 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"OFFICE SPACE RENTAL FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL & COASTAL QUALITY– ROTA BRANCH"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE HORIGUCHI BLDG. GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

THE LESSOR MUST COMPLY WITH CNMI PUBLIC LAW 15-23. ARTICLE 5, SECTION 8652 (A-D)

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
RFP NO.: ITB22-BECQT-42200069

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2022 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

"OFFICE SPACE RENTAL FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL & COASTAL QUALITY – TINIAN BRANCH"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE HORIGUCHI BLDG. GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM • WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

NOTICE OF
TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) gives notice that a Town Hall Meeting is being held to address matters surrounding the 2020 Audit Report, the Passenger Facility Charges Audit, and the litigation history between Star Marianas Air and CPA.

The Town Hall Meeting will be held on the following dates:

Saipan: Thursday, February 03, 2022, 6:00 p.m. in the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport's Departure Area.

Rota: Tuesday, February 08, 2022, 6:00 p.m. in the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport's Departure Area.

Tinian: Tuesday, February 22, 2022, 6:00 p.m. at the Tinian International Airport's Departure Terminal.

Persons wishing to make comments may do so in person or may email them to cpa.receptionist@pticom.com by no later than 4:00pm on **February 23, 2022**.

_____/s/_____
CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
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E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM WEBSITE: HTTPS: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport
"Car Rental Concessions"
CPA-RFP-008-21
Request for Proposals
for: CPA Concession No. CRR-2021-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport for a period of about two years (contract ends on 5/31/2024) upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-RFP-008-21 is **January 13, 2022**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of $100.00 (certified cashier's checks made out to Commonwealth Ports Authority) to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION TO BID
ITB22-GOV-42200040

RENOVATION OF BUILDING 1314
FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING AGENCY

SUBMISSION DATE: 10:00 AM ChST FEBRUARY 17, 2022

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed bids for the *Renovation of Building 1314 for the Criminal Justice Planning Agency* in Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **January 18, 2022** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the project site located in Capitol Hill, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST Feburary 2, 2022**. Proposers may request to participate via phone call or virtually five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled. All attendees are required to use a face mask and exercise social distancing throughout the duration of the meeting.

Questions regarding this ITB may be sumitted via email to Ms. Sunny Aldan at sunny.aldan@gov.mp no later than **4:30 PM ChST February 8, 2022**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM ChST, February 17, 2022**.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

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/s/ Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor, CNMI

/s/ Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director
CNMI Procurement & Supply

Life & Style

Cheslie Kryst, former Miss USA, dies at 30

NEW YORK (AP)—Cheslie Kryst, the 2019 winner of the Miss USA pageant and a correspondent for the entertainment news program "Extra," has died at age 30.

Police said Kryst jumped from a Manhattan apartment building and was pronounced dead at the scene Sunday morning. Her family confirmed her death in a statement.

"In devastation and great sorrow, we share the passing of our beloved Cheslie. Her great light was one that inspired others around the world with her beauty and strength," her family said.

"Cheslie embodied love and served others, whether through her work as an attorney fighting for social justice, as Miss USA and as a host on EXTRA. But most importantly, as a daughter, sister, friend, mentor and colleague – we know her impact will live on," her family said.

Kryst, a former Division I athlete and North Carolina attorney, won the Miss USA pageant in May, 2019, and competed in the Miss Universe pageant that year.

When Kryst was crowned, it marked more than a personal triumph: It meant that for the first time, , three Black women were the reigning Miss USA, Miss Teen USA and Miss America.

In a statement Sunday, the nationally syndicated program "Extra" described Kryst as "not just a vital part of our show, she was a beloved part of our Extra family and touched the entire staff. Our deepest condolences to all her family and friends."

Kryst provided commentary at last month's Miss Universe pageant, which called her "one of the brightest, warmest, and most kind people we have ever had the privilege of knowing. Our entire community mourns her loss."

University of South Carolina praised the former student-athlete, calling her "a woman of many talents." Kryst also held an MBA from Wake Forest University.

According to police, Kryst's body was found at approximately 7 a.m. Sunday in front of the Orion building, a high-rise on West 42nd Street in midtown Manhattan.

(JASON BEAN/THE RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL VIA AP, FILE)

Miss North Carolina Cheslie Kryst wins the 2019 Miss USA final competition in the Grand Theatre in the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nev., on May 2, 2019.

On a quiet weekend in theaters, 'Spider-Man' is No. 1 again

NEW YORK (AP)—On a chillingly quiet weekend at movie theaters, "Spider-Man: No Way Home" again topped the box office in its seventh week of release.

January is traditionally a slow month for moviegoing and that's been especially true this year, in part because the omicron variant of the coronavirus prompted some postponements. But even before the omicron surge or a blizzard that forced some theaters closed Saturday in the Northeast, the weekend was set to be especially muted.

Sony Pictures' "Spider-Man: No Way Home" grossed $11 million over the weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday, bringing its domestic total to $735.9 million. The Marvel hit has accounted for a huge percentage of the month's ticket sales.

"No Way Home," which has topped the box office for six of the past seven weekends, has continued to hold well since opening in December. This weekend, it dropped only 20% from the week prior. In the record books, "No Way Home" is approaching the third-highest grossing film in North America, "Avatar" ($760 million). It also added $21.1 million overseas to pass $1 billion internationally.

But aside from Paramount Pictures' "Scream," which stayed in second place with $7.4 million in its third weekend, January has been a dead zone. No new releases opened widely over the weekend. Last week, one of the only films to try to open nationwide was "The King's Daughter," a woebegone fairy tale starring Pierce Brosnan that was made in 2014.

While the ups and downs of the pandemic have meant a fluctuating recovery for movie theaters, the dearth of January releases comes on the heels of Hollywood's biggest pandemic success in "Spider-Man: No Way Home." At the box office, famine has followed feast.

"Lack of movies is a critical issue for movie theaters," said Patrick Corcoran, spokesman for the National Association of Theater Owners. "Contrary to some industry thinking, we cannot live on blockbusters alone. A consistent flow of exclusive movies to the movie theater is necessary to serve the range of audiences that go to the movies."

"We cannot get back to normal and show audiences that movie theaters are safe if the studios don't give us a normal flow of films," added Corcoran.

For exhibitors, it's a potentially worrying sign of what may come. Though there have always been lulls at the box office, such quiet periods could become more regular. Aside from the myriad films that go straight to streaming on platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Apple TV+, industry consolidation—and less major studio product—has been a concern for theater owners since Walt Disney Co. acquired 20th Century Fox in 2019.

Whether the theatrical business can weather the changes wrought by streaming is one question. But another, and potentially more pressing one is whether theaters will always have enough movies to subsist in between the biggest hits.

Next week, Lionsgate's "Moonfall" and Paramount Pictures' "Jackass Forever" will open and are expected to finally topple "Spider-Man: No Way Home" from the top spot. A large number of blockbusters, including "The Batman," "Jurassic World: Dominion" and "Top Gun: Maverick," await in 2022. But some alarmingly thin periods may, too.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. **"Spider-Man: No Way-Home,"** $11 million.
2. **"Scream,"** $7.4 million.
3. **"Sing 2,"** $4.8 million.
4. **"Redeeming Love,"** $1.9 million.
5. **"The King's Man,"** $1.8 million.
6. **"The 355,"** $1.4 million.
7. **"American Underdog,"** $1.2 million.
8. **"Ghostbusters: Afterlife,"** $770,000.
9. **"Licorice Pizza,"** $691,000.
10. **West Side Story,"** $614,000.

Spotify to add advisories to podcasts discussing COVID-19

NEW YORK (AP)—Following protests of Spotify kicked off by Neil Young over the spread of COVID-19 vaccine misinformation, the music streaming service said that it will add content advisories before podcasts discussing the virus.

In a post Sunday, Spotify chief executive Daniel Ek laid out more transparent platform rules given the backlash stirred by Young, who on Wednesday had his music removed from Spotify after the tech giant declined to get rid of episodes of "The Joe Rogan Experience," which has been criticized for spreading virus misinformation.

"Personally, there are plenty of individuals and views on Spotify that I disagree with strongly," wrote Ek. "It is important to me that we don't take on the position of being content censor while also making sure that there are rules in place and consequences for those who violate them."

Ek said that the advisories will link to Spotify's fact-based COVID-19 hub in what he described as a "new effort to combat misinformation." It will roll out in the coming days, Ek said. He did not specifically reference Rogan or Young.

Man's crude behavior is a turn-off at home

DEAR ABBY: My 55-year-old husband and I have been married more than 25 years. Our marriage has been challenging, but we now have three adult sons to help succeed in the world, one of whom has a chronic severe health condition.

My biggest problem is my husband won't stop pointing out how much he notices I'm aging. He says I'm going downhill. I don't ask for his opinion or open the discussion. If I'm not "in the mood" after he has been staring at his phone for hours, probably looking at nude women as I've seen him do many times, he calls me a shriveled-up prune.

He also constantly comments about younger women on TV, in the movies or even on the local news, and says things like, "Where's that juicy young blonde who was on the news before?" Or he tells me how much I resemble an old woman on TV who looks like she's 20 years older than I am. He also never fails to point out young women who still have their "baby fat," which I don't.

He says he loves me and hugs and kisses me every day, but then he acts so creepy I don't want him touching me. He is really starting to disgust and confuse me. He knows how I feel about this. Now he's telling me I'M crazy because of how I feel about his behavior. I don't know why he's acting like this. It seems like he's looking for an excuse to stray. I have been told before that he has incurable narcissism.

FADING IN WASHINGTON

DEAR FADING: Couples are supposed to love each other for who they are, not their appearance. Your husband is emotionally abusive. His hostility is blatant. That he would expect you to have sex with him after hours on his cellphone—and no foreplay—is incredibly naive.

Could he be deliberately trying to sabotage your marriage? A marriage and family therapist might be able to get to the bottom of this, but if counseling doesn't help, you may have to let your adult sons fend for themselves and start taking care of yourself.

***

DEAR ABBY: I have this friend I have known since I was 9. She's a very good friend, but she doesn't get along with my boyfriend. They fight, and when they do, I'm stuck in the middle. I have spoken to both of them many times and asked them to coexist for my sake. They both try hard, but we all feel like we are walking on eggshells—especially me. How do I handle being with them for holiday celebrations and special occasions at my apartment?

UNEASY IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR UNEASY: I wish you had mentioned which one is causing these "fights." Mature individuals opt to "agree to disagree" and change the subject, rather than allow an argument to degenerate into open conflict. Explain this to both of them, and the next time you are caught in the middle, ask the person who picked the fight to do that -- or leave. And, if things don't get better, celebrate with them separately as often as possible.

***

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO MY ASIAN READERS WHO CELEBRATE THE LUNAR NEW YEAR: The Year of the Tiger begins today. Those born in the Year of the Tiger are brave, competitive, unpredictable and confident. Famous Tiger Year people are Tom Cruise, Leonardo DiCaprio, Lady Gaga and Queen Elizabeth II. I am wishing a happy, healthy new year to all who are celebrating this holiday.

LOVE, ABBY

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

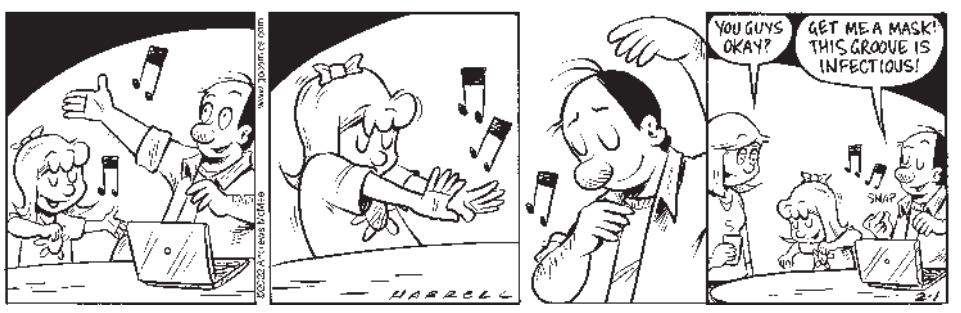
By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

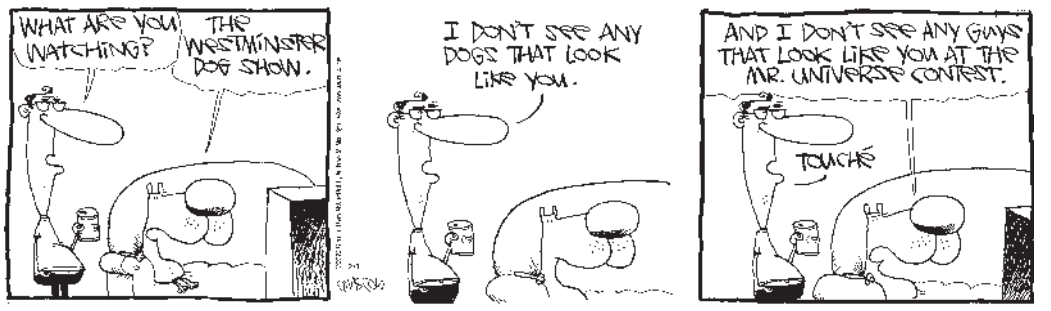
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?
THE WESTMINSTER DOG SHOW.
I DON'T SEE ANY DOGS THAT LOOK LIKE YOU.
AND I DON'T SEE ANY GUYS THAT LOOK LIKE YOU AT THE MR. UNIVERSE CONTEST.
TOUCHÉ

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Spill the beans
5 Blend
9 '60s war zone
12 Alpha follower
13 Toledo's lake
14 Mineral suffix
15 Frigid spells
17 Classic Pontiac
18 Toe malady
19 "Hog-wash!"
21 Wishes (for)
24 Milk, in Montmartre
25 Love god
26 Tropical flower
30 Unprocessed
31 Uproar
32 Ginger —
33 Showy flowers
35 Detail, briefly
36 Poolroom prop
37 Basilica areas
38 African language group
40 Architect Saarinen
42 Eggs
43 Golf hazards
48 Agent
49 Actress Lena
50 "— chic!"
51 Hosp. sections
52 Zilch
53 Epidermis

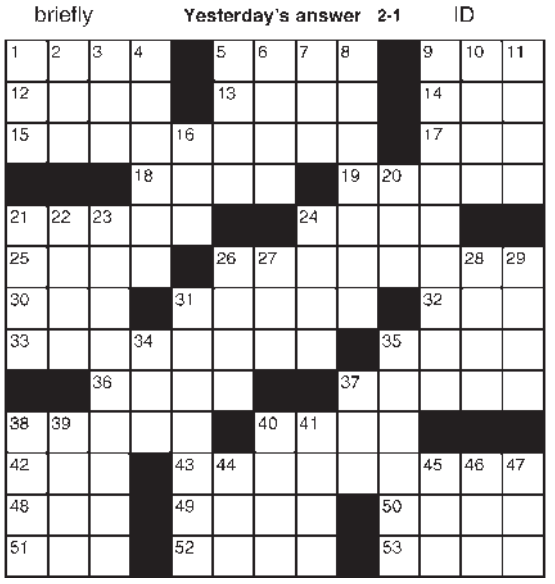
DOWN

1 Telly network
2 Author Tolstoy
3 Pac. counterpart
4 Police identifiers
5 Diner handout
6 Part of Q.E.D.
7 Back talk
8 Woe
9 Bedtime drinks
10 "— boy!"
11 Cat call
16 "Mayday!"
20 Bro's kin
21 Olympian queen
22 Algerian port
23 Afternoon energizers
24 Wall St. deals
26 Big slice
27 Anger
28 Peter Fonda role
29 Brief moments
31 Deal primarily with
34 Wrestling surface
35 The "S" of ESPN
37 Museum display
38 Drill
39 Say it's so
40 Wife of Geraint
41 Author Ferber
44 In the style of
45 Biblical boat
46 Architect I. M.
47 Nine-digit ID

Solution time: 22 mins.

P	H	E	W	■	G	A	R	■	B	L	E	D
A	J	■	O	T	U	N	E	■	R	I	T	E
R	E	E	N	G	A	G	E	■	F	I	A	N
■	■	■	T	I	C	■	N	F	A	T	I	Y
A	L	O	O	F	■	B	A	R	S	■	■	■
B	A	R	N	■	R	I	C	O	T	T	A	■
U	N	A	■	B	E	E	T	S	■	A	X	E
■	A	N	T	L	E	R	S	■	M	R	I	S
■	■	■	N	O	M	S	■	A	T	E	S	T
S	T	R	O	B	E	■	P	R	E	■	■	■
E	R	S	T	■	R	E	E	N	T	E	R	S
R	A	V	E	■	G	R	E	E	N	T	E	A
A	P	P	S	■	E	E	K	■	A	A	A	S

Yesterday's answer 2-1



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Harry Styles, 28; Ronda Rousey, 35; Big Boi, 47; Michael C. Hall, 51.

Happy Birthday: A direct approach to whatever you take on will help you reach your goal. Stay on course, regardless of temptation or what others decide to do. Control your emotions, designate time to research and preparation. Look atfacts before you take what others say into consideration. Base your decisions on what you know and what you can do. Your numbers are 5, 16, 21, 26, 29, 37, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Listen, assess and formulate what you must do to reach your target. Call on someone you know you can rely on, it will verify that you are on the right track and put your mind at ease. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Indecisiveness will cause confusion, and mistakes will occur if you can't differentiate between what you want and what you can have. Dissect the information you receive, and verify facts. Reality and practicality trump winging it. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Stay on track and forge ahead. Ignore what others do or say so you don't fall behind. Simplify your life and stick to the path that leads to the highest rewards. You stand to prosper if you are dedicated and innovative. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* You'll have some unique ideas to share. The input you receive will help you expand your plans. Reach for the stars, and you'll make a difference to the outcome. Love is in the stars, and making a bold move will be engaging. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Partner with someone who has as much to offer. If you join forces with someone who is all talk and no action, you'll do all the work yourself and still have to share the rewards. Set high standards, and expect the same from others. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* You have plenty to look forward to if you embrace the changes that come your way. Don't fear doing things differently or changing your direction midway. Let your intuition guide you, and you will find the happiness you deserve. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Show resilience and tenacity, and you will overcome any negativity or opposition you meet along the way. Deny anyone the right to lead you astray or take away what's rightfully yours. Call the shots, and make meaningful decisions. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Don't let bitterness engulf you when creativity and adventure will enlighten you and push you in a beneficial direction. A positive attitude will make it easier to let go of the past and find solace and peace of mind in the future. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Spend more time on moneymaking projects and less socializing with your friends. Too much partying will lead to temptations that make someone you care about question your standards and morals. Protect your reputation, position and valued relationships. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Count on yourself and you won't be disappointed. Delegating responsibilities to someone who isn't reliable will leave you looking bad. Pick up the pace, and you'll be able to get everything done on time by yourself. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Check facts, but let your emotions contribute to your decision. Have a heart and be mindful, but don't show gullibility. A positive change can lead to progress, but it must be for the right reason to get the result you want. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Listen, evaluate, adjust and do what works for you. Don't feel you have to do things the way someone specifies if you have a system that works better for you. Process what's entailed, and deliver what's essential. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are diplomatic, intelligent and conscientious. You are visceral and complex

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

9				4			1	
			9			3		2
					3		8	
	3			2		6		
7			6	5	8			9
		1		9			2	
	5		7					
4		7			5			
	6			8				4

Difficulty Level ★★ 2/01

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	3	6	1	9	4	8	2	7
4	8	9	2	7	6	1	3	5
1	2	7	5	3	8	9	4	6
8	7	5	6	4	9	3	1	2
3	4	1	7	2	5	6	8	9
6	9	2	3	8	1	5	7	4
9	5	3	4	1	2	7	6	8
2	1	8	9	6	7	4	5	3
7	6	4	8	5	3	2	9	1

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

NOISY WORDS **Solution: 9 letters**

C	B	A	M	U	S	I	C	C	S	H	O	U	T	B
A	O	T	R	E	E	N	G	I	N	E	S	(L)	U	G
C	I	M	H	E	T	C	R	M	R	H	(O)	R	N	S
O	S	O	M	U	T	E	I	S	O	(U)	S	I	Y	P
P	T	S	O	U	N	T	R	O	(D)	T	G	T	S	E
H	E	P	O	E	N	D	A	C	V	N	E	D	E	A
O	R	H	I	I	R	I	E	H	I	K	N	C	I	K
N	O	E	H	E	D	E	C	R	C	U	P	E	V	E
O	U	R	M	S	R	A	T	A	O	K	O	C	O	R
U	S	E	T	A	A	C	R	S	T	U	P	H	M	E
S	I	C	H	E	E	R	I	N	G	I	S	O	N	M
O	G	B	A	R	K	R	B	N	R	A	O	R	P	U
L	N	D	W	O	R	C	C	R	G	B	O	N	L	L
A	A	L	L	A	C	R	O	S	S	T	A	L	K	O
R	L	G	N	I	R	A	O	R	O	W	D	Y	L	V

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Atmosphere, Bark, Boisterous, Boom, Brash, Burst, Cacophonous, Call, Chatter, Cheering, Communication, Cosmic, Cross Talk, Crowd, Echo, Engines, Horns, Loud, Meter, Movies, Music, Piercing, Pops, Rackety, Radio, Ringing, Roaring, Rocket, Rowdy, Scream, Shout, Signal, Siren, Solar, Sounds, Speaker, Stereo, Thunderous, Uproar, Voice, Volume

Yesterday's Answer: Growing

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 50, 51 and 53 through 66,** order on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Rams rally to Super Bowl with stunning win over Niners

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)—After Matthew Stafford's wife leaped into his arms, he took a moment to soak it all in—this victory, this confetti-strewn field, this remarkable year of his life.

One year to the day after the quarterback agreed to join the star-studded Los Angeles Rams for a shot at a ring, their chances were dimming rapidly when they headed into the fourth quarter of the NFC championship game down by double digits to the mighty San Francisco 49ers.

But with three gritty scoring drives followed by a cathartic defensive stand, the Rams secured the right to stay home for the Super Bowl — and Stafford shone the brightest in this impressive constellation.

Travin Howard made a game-sealing interception with 1:09 to play, and the Rams roared back in the fourth quarter to secure a spot in the Super Bowl at their home stadium next month with a thrilling 20-17 victory Sunday night.

"You can't write the story any better," Stafford said. "I'm at a loss for words. I'm just having a blast playing ball with these guys and, shoot, we've got one more at the home stadium. Let's get it done."

Los Angeles will welcome the Cincinnati Bengals in two weeks for Super Bowl 56 in Rams owner Stan Kroenke's multibillion-dollar SoFi Stadium.

Stafford passed for 337 yards and hit Cooper Kupp with two touchdown passes for the Rams (15-5), who began the fourth quarter down 17-7.

AP

Los Angeles Rams' Travin Howard (32) intercepts a pass in front of San Francisco 49ers' JaMycal Hasty during the second half of the NFC Championship NFL football game Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022, in Inglewood, Calif.

But after Kupp's second TD catch and a tying field goal on a drive extended by Jaquiski Tartt's brutal dropped interception, the Rams drove for Matt Gay's go-ahead, 30-yard field goal with 1:46 to play.

Los Angeles' defense then won it when Aaron Donald got hold of Jimmy Garoppolo and forced him to fling a pass toward JaMycal Hasty. The ball caromed high in the air off Hasty's hands and came straight down to Howard — and it was secured by the fourth-year pro who only recently got a prominent role on LA's defense.

"I've got total trust and confidence in that defense, man," said Stafford, the 13-year veteran who never won a playoff game before this month. "They've been unbelievable all year. Way to freakin' ice the game. I loved it."

Kupp finished with 11 catches for 142 yards in his latest spectacular game, while Odell Beckham Jr. punched his ticket to his first Super Bowl with yet another strong performance by Los Angeles' midseason acquisition, making nine catches for 113 yards.

"The story could not be written any better for us to play them in the NFC championship and then shut the door," Beckham said of the 49ers.

The Rams won their second conference title in the past four years under coach Sean McVay and moved one step from the franchise's second championship in the Super Bowl era.

Perhaps even more impressively, Los Angeles finally snapped a six-game losing streak against its San Francisco archrivals, who secured their playoff berth with an overtime comeback victory in Inglewood just three weeks ago.

"I think we knew what a great team this was, but our guys genuinely knew that what happened in the previous six games had nothing to do with what was going to happen when we kicked this one off," McVay said.

The Rams have only won twice when trailing by double digits in the second half during McVay's half-decade in charge — and both victories were in conference championship games.

Deebo Samuel and George Kittle caught touchdown passes from Garoppolo, who passed for 232 yards in a heartbreaker for the 49ers (12-8). While San Francisco's defense faltered late, coach Kyle Shanahan also punted twice from the Rams' half of the field and a third time from the 50, and that caution likely ended up costing the Niners.

"I thought we had them on the ropes, but we gave them a chance," Shanahan said. "When you give those guys too many chances, eventually they are going to make them."

San Francisco also will lament its late-game execution, but no mistake was bigger than the dropped interception by Tartt, who could have put the Rams in dire straits moments after McVay wasted his final timeout on a failed challenge early in the fourth quarter.

"I felt confident the entire game," Kittle said. "Felt we were calm. They just made real good play. The Rams have superstars all over the field."

Those stars started slowly: Stafford threw a tipped endzone interception on the Rams' second drive, and the Niners answered a subsequent 97-yard LA scoring drive with yet another moment of brilliance from Samuel. The All-Pro caught an inside screen pass and rampaged through the Los Angeles defense, diving to the pylon for his first career postseason scoring catch.

The Rams appeared to be in real trouble when San Francisco's defense stopped them on downs near midfield in the third quarter and Garoppolo hit Kittle for his second TD pass moments later. But Los Angeles kept it close with a gritty drive ending in Kupp's 11-yard TD catch early in the fourth quarter.

After 54 consecutive Super Bowls without an NFL team playing in its home stadium, the Rams are the second team to do it in two seasons after Tampa Bay broke the streak last year.

McVay unsuccessfully challenged two calls in the second half, failing to overturn a fourth-down spot for his offense or a potential Niners fumble. The decisions — and another wasted timeout before a first-down play — left Los Angeles with no timeouts and 10:01 to play.

Bengals top Chiefs 27-24 in OT to clinch Super Bowl trip

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Who Dey!? Not those same ol' Bungles. Not even close.

Joe Burrow and these young, hungry Cincinnati Bengals are Super Bowl-bound as unexpected and tenacious AFC champions.

Evan McPherson kicked a 31-yard field goal with 9:22 left in overtime after Burrow kept his cool while leading a furious second-half comeback. They got the Bengals to the NFL's big game for the first time in 33 years with a 27-24 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs for the AFC championship on Sunday.

"It's a special team that's capable of doing special things," said coach Zac Taylor, who was in elementary school the last time the Bengals went to the Super Bowl.

"We've said that from the get-go, whether people believed us or not," he added. "We believed. So we're not surprised."

And who could blame them?

The Bengals erased an 18-point deficit — tying an AFC title game record for largest comeback — to take a late 24-21 lead on McPherson's 52-yarder.

"I'd say nobody blinked an eye," the rookie kicker said of the Bengals falling behind big early. "I think we all thought we were going to come back and win the game."

But Harrison Butker's 44-yard kick as time expired in regulation sent it to overtime a week after his 49-yarder on the final play of regulation did the same against Buffalo.

And after the Bills' Josh Allen called tails and it came up heads for the overtime coin toss in that one — giving Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs the ball to seal a wild 42-26 victory — Cincinnati backup quarterback Brandon Allen called heads and the coin came up tails.

The Chiefs opened overtime again with the ball, but Vonn Bell intercepted Mahomes on the third play, and Burrow and the Bengals took over.

And now they're heading to the Super Bowl for the first time since 1989 after winning their first playoff overtime game.

"Usually when you lose the coin flip to those guys, you're going home," said Burrow, the Bengals' second-year quarterback. "Our defense really stepped up and made plays in the second half. And on offense we made plays when we had to. I thought the offensive line played really well all day. We started running the ball there at the end and that's exciting.

"Big win for us."

You might say that.

The Bengals (13-7) will play the Los Angeles Rams (15-5) in the Super Bowl at the Rams' home stadium on Feb. 13. Cincinnati lost to the 49ers in both of its previous trips to the Super Bowl.

Mahomes and the Chiefs (14-6) will be left to lament blowing a chance at a third straight Super Bowl appearance.

"When you're up 21-3 at any point in the game, you can't lose it," Mahomes said. "I put that on myself."

The Chiefs had a chance at a winning touchdown in the closing seconds of regulation, but sacks by Sam Hubbard on consecutive plays forced Kansas City to settle for the tying field goal.

"We're going to the Super Bowl," Hubbard said. "It sounds crazy to say that."

The Bengals have won six of their last seven games against the Chiefs, including two this season. But it didn't look good for Cincinnati early in this one.

The Chiefs got a touchdown on their first three possessions, with Mahomes finding Mecole Hardman for a 3-yard score that made it 21-3 — and had this one looking very much like a rout. Mahomes joined Tom Brady (2014), Joe Flacco (2012) and Aaron Rodgers (2010) as the only players with three or more TD passes in a single postseason.

But Burrow kept the Bengals in it.

He tossed a short pass to Samaje Perine, who avoided a tackle attempt by Charvarius Ward and raced into the end zone for a 41-yard touchdown with 1:05 left in the opening half.

The Chiefs appeared headed for their fourth straight touchdown drive to open the game, especially after Byron Pringle's 10-yard catch put Kansas City at the 15 with 13 seconds left — setting off chants from the fired-up Arrowhead Stadium crowd of "13 seconds!" who were still reveling in the Chiefs' stunning comeback last week against Buffalo.

A pass interference call on Eli Apple in the end zone put the ball on the 1, but the Chiefs couldn't get into the end zone on two tries, with Mahomes' pass to Tyreek Hill losing a yard and ending the half. It ended up costing them.

"I was hoping we could get the ball in the end zone," coach Andy Reid said. "I probably gave the wrong play, first of all. I could have given them something better than that. I'll take responsibility for that one."

McPherson's 31-yarder cut the Bengals' deficit to 21-13 with 2:58 left in the third quarter.

Cincinnati got the ball back at the Chiefs 27 moments later when B.J. Hill intercepted Mahomes' short pass intended for Demarcus Robinson. Two plays after Joe Mixon gained 2 yards on first-and-goal from the 5, Ja'Marr Chase went up over Rashad Fenton in the end zone to catch Burrow's toss for a touchdown. Burrow then found a wide-open Trent Taylor for the 2-point conversion to tie it at 21 with 14 seconds left in the third quarter.

The 18-point comeback by Cincinnati tied Indianapolis (vs. New England in 2006) for the largest in AFC championship history.

"I wouldn't call it surreal, I would say it's exciting," Burrow said. "I think if you would have told me before the season that we'd be going to the Super Bowl, I probably would have called you crazy. Then, you know, we play the whole season and nothing surprises me now."

Suns beat Spurs for 10th straight win, NBA-best 40-9 record

PHOENIX (AP)— Devin Booker scored 28 points, Mikal Bridges added a season-high 26 and the Phoenix Suns overcame a 12-point deficit in the fourth quarter to win their 10th straight game, beating the San Antonio Spurs 115-110 on Sunday night.

The NBA-leading Suns became the first team in the league with 40 wins — against only nine losses. The victory also assured that coach Monty Williams and the rest of the coaching staff will lead Team LeBron in the All-Star Game next month.

Booker hit back-to-back 3-pointers late in the fourth to turn a two-point deficit into a 112-108 lead with 1:18 left. He finished 12 of 24 from the field, going 4 of 9 from 3-point range.

The Spurs took a 91-79 lead into the final quarter, but the Suns erased that advantage in less than 3 1/2 minutes. They used a 14-point run — highlighted by Cam Johnson's powerful one-handed jam — to take a 96-93 lead.

Phoenix point guard Chris Paul had another huge game with 20 points, 19 assists and eight rebounds, just two nights after he had his 18th career triple-double. Bridges shot 11 of 16 from the field.

JaVale McGee returned to the Suns after missing two games with left knee soreness. Starters Deandre Ayton (right ankle sprain) and Jae Crowder (left wrist contusion) and key backup Cameron Payne (right wrist sprain) remained out.

Doug McDermott led San Antonio with 24 points.

AP

Phoenix Suns center Bismack Biyombo (18) blocks the shot of San Antonio Spurs guard Lonnie Walker IV (1) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022, in Phoenix.

Hawks 129, Lakers 121

In Atlanta, Trae Young scored 36 points and Atlanta won its seventh straight, rallying in the fourth quarter to beat Los Angeles.

Young also had 12 assists. John Collins added 20 points with 11 rebounds, and Clint Capela scored 15 points.

Malik Monk led Los Angeles with 33 points in the Lakers' third consecutive loss, all without LeBron James. James was not with the team due to continued swelling in his left knee. He returned to Los Angeles for treatment.

Anthony Davis, returning after missing one game with a sore right wrist, had 27 points for Los Angeles. Russell Westbrook added 20 points.

Nuggets 136, Bucks 100

In Milwaukee, Nikola Jokic had 18 points, 15 assists and nine rebounds to help Denver rout Milwaukee.

The reigning NBA MVP just missed his 13th triple-double of the season. He matched his season high for assists.

Aaron Gordon scored 24 points, Monte Morris had 18 and Will Barton 15 for the Nuggets. They improved to 4-0 on a six-game trip and matched their longest winning streak of the season. Denver has won six of the last seven and 13 of the last 19 road games against Milwaukee.

Milwaukee star Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 22 of his 29 points in the first half. He was the MVP in consecutive seasons before Jokic earned that honor last season.

Timberwolves 126, Jazz 106

In Minneapolis, Karl-Anthony Towns had 31 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists, Jaden McDaniels scored a season-high 22 points off the bench and Minnesota routed short-handed Utah.

Towns scored 16 straight points as the Wolves pushed a four-point halftime lead to 17 entering the fourth quarter.

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 23 for Utah. The Jazz have lost five straight.

Playing without Donovan Mitchell (concussion) and Rudy Gobert (left calf strain), the Jazz suffered another setback when forward Joe Ingles exited the game in the second quarter with a left knee injury.

Bulls 130, Trail Blazers 116

In Chicago, Nikola Vucevic had 24 points and 14 rebounds, DeMar DeRozan added 23 points and 10 assists and Chicago overcame a slow to start to beat Portland.

Zach LaVine had 20 points, and Ayo Dosunmu finished with 11 assists. Chicago has won three of four to improve to 31-18.

C.J. McCollum had 29 points for Portland. Norman Powell added 22, and Anfernee Simons had 21.

Clippers 115, Hornets 90

In Charlotte, N.C., Reggie Jackson and Brandon Boston Jr. each scored 19 points, helping Los Angeles beat Charlotte.

Marcus Morris Sr. scored 16 points for the Clippers. They improved to 4-3 on an eight-game trip.

LaMelo Ball had 23 points, 10 assists, six rebounds and no turnovers for Charlotte. Miles Bridges had 18 points and nine rebounds.

Pistons 115, Cavaliers 105

In Detroit, Saddiq Bey scored 31 points, Cade Cunningham had 19 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists and the Detroit Pistons overcame a terrible start to beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 115-105 on Sunday night.

After Cleveland raced to a 15-0 lead, Detroit cut it to 55-49 at halftime, and finally took its first lead in the fourth quarter. Cunningham finished with the triple-double after failing to score in the first half.

Darius Garland had 24 points for Cleveland. The Cavaliers lost for the second time in 10 games.

Magic 110, Mavericks 108

In Orlando, Fla., Franz Wagner scored 18 points, including the tiebreaking layup with 54 seconds remaining, and Orlando Magic overcame Luka Doncic's seventh triple-double of the season to beat Dallas.

Chuma Okeke scored 19 points and helped NBA-worst Orlando win consecutive games for the second time this season.

Doncic had 34 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists for his 43rd career triple-double.

Analysis: NBA All-Star voting by players, again, was flawed

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

It has become an annual joke, one that NBA players keep repeating.

For the sixth consecutive year, players had the right to have a significant say in the process of deciding who will start the All-Star Game. The NBA uses a formula to do that now, with fan voting counting for 50% of the total, a media panel counting for 25% and the players themselves getting 25%.

And, also for the sixth consecutive year, most players didn't take the process seriously.

There's no other way to explain how 297 players had at least one of their peers — or themselves — saying that they should start next month's All-Star Game in Cleveland. Ben Simmons got two votes; he has not played this season because he doesn't want to play for Philadelphia. Kawhi Leonard got two votes; he has not played this season because of injury. John Wall, T.J. Warren, Luka Samanic and Michael Carter-Williams all got votes; they, too, have not played this season.

The NBA got votes back from 323 players in this year's voting. Only four players appeared on more than half of those ballots. Kevin Durant was on 64.1% of them, Giannis Antetokounmpo on 56.7%, LeBron James on 52.9% and Nikola Jokic on 51.7%.

Imagine this: More than half of the players in the NBA didn't think that Joel Embiid — who likely would win the MVP award going away if the vote was held today — shouldn't be an All-Star starter.

Make it make sense.

The NBA changed the rules six years ago for 768,112 reasons. That was the number of fan votes that Zaza Pachulia received in 2016, nearly enough to make him an All-Star starter that season. His candidacy was fueled by social-media influencers and many votes from the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

Hence, the league went to the weighted formula. And players have turned it into a mockery.

In 2017, there were 283 players who got at least one All-Star starters vote from a peer or themselves. In 2018, the number was 249. In 2019, it was 289. In 2020, it went up to 292. In 2021, up again to 310.

At least this season the number went down, albeit slightly.

But it'd be great to hear the arguments from players about why Kyrie Irving, who has played in seven games this season because of his vaccination status, got more votes from players (25) than someone like Miami's Jimmy Butler (23), who has helped the Heat move into first place in the Eastern Conference.

Or why someone thought Zylan Cheatham and Jay Huff should start the All-Star Game. By all accounts, they are excellent teammates. But they have combined for five NBA appearances and zero NBA points this season. Each got one vote anyway.

Moses Wright played in one game, logging 88 scoreless seconds, for the Clippers. He got two starter votes. So did McKinley Wright IV, his five points in three games for Minnesota earning him the two votes. Joel Ayayi scored two points in seven games with Washington; he got a vote. George King got a vote, which is one vote for every point he's scored for Dallas this season.

Many of the players who got one or two votes were hardship signings who, quite frankly, deserve enormous credit for keeping the league afloat this season when rosters were getting decimated by positive COVID-19 tests.

But most of the player votes didn't seem to be sentimental or look like praise for those who were brought in on those 10-day deals. They apparently were either meant to be funny, or to make fun of the process, or both.

Luckily, fans are pretty much getting what they wanted, which should be all that matters since the game is about them. The nine players who got the most fan votes were all picked as starters — James, Stephen Curry, Durant, Antetokounmpo, Jokic, DeMar DeRozan, Embiid, Ja Morant and Andrew Wiggins. The only starter who wasn't in the top 10 of fan voting was Trae Young; he was 11th among fans, one spot behind Paul George.

And, once again, the player voting silliness doesn't appear to have cost anyone a well-deserved starting nod.

But there will be a day when that happens, and that'll be an embarrassing day for the NBA.

Nadal wins Australian Open for record 21st major title

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Searching for inspiration when he was down two sets and facing triple break point, with his prospects of winning a record 21st Grand Slam title almost shot, Rafael Nadal thought back to some of his most difficult defeats.

A renowned right-to-the-end competitor, Nadal dug deep in that critical moment and won the next four points to survive the immediate threat from Daniil Medvedev. Minutes later he held for 3-3 in the third set and swung the momentum of the Australian Open final around.

Nadal eventually did get to 21 first, setting the men's record for most Grand Slam singles titles after a dramatic 2-6, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-4, 7-5 comeback win that lasted 5 hours and 24 minutes and finished early Monday morning.

The 35-year-old Spaniard now has one more major title than Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic, his long-time rivals in the so-called Big Three.

He was the only one of three who had a chance to claim the record solo in Australia.

Federer is still recovering from knee surgery and Djokovic was sensationally deported from Australia on the eve of the tournament because he wasn't vaccinated against COVID-19.

It's all history now that Nadal, who has had injury problems of his own has become just the fourth man to win all four of the sport's major titles at least twice.

"I was repeating to myself during the whole match, 'I lost a lot of times here having chances, sometimes I was a little bit unlucky,'" Nadal said. "I just wanted to keep believing until the end."

"Tonight has been unforgettable. I feel very lucky."

Nadal was broken when serving to serve it out for the first time at 5-4 in the fifth set, but he made no mistake two games later, converting the first of his championship points.

Taking everything into account, "the scenario, the momentum," he said, "without a doubt probably the biggest comeback of my tennis career."

AP

Rafael Nadal of Spain holds the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup after defeating Daniil Medvedev of Russia in the men's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, early Monday, Jan. 31, 2022.

Certainly, he added, "The most unexpected. And most surprising, I think, for everyone."

On Monday, Nadal indicated he wouldn't be reducing his schedule for the rest of 2022.

"Of course, after this month of practicing hard, playing very long matches, the foot was able to hold all this stress, of course I feel more confident that I going to have the chance to keep going, keep fighting, keep enjoying this beautiful sport," he said. "That's what make me happy. I just feel confident now that I going to have my chances to keep playing tennis for a while, yeah."

Federer and Djokovic were watching the final, from a distance, and both used social media messages to offer congratulations to Nadal for breaking their three-way tie atop the men's Grand Slam standings.

Nadal and Medvedev packed a lot of drama into the final that started Sunday night, was delayed in the 84-minute second set when a human rights activist jumped onto the court, and finished close to 1:15 a.m.

Nadal was serving for the second set but was broken in that game. Then Medvedev had his moments to break again in the third set but admitted he got tight.

"Should have done better. Should have hit a winner," Medvedev said. "Maybe would have won the match."

"Tactically nothing changed," he added, "but Rafa stepped up."

Indeed, he did. And at 1:30 a.m. he stepped up onto the podium to give his victory speech.

"Good evening. No, good morning!" Nadal joked, looking at his watch.

In the background, Rod Laver, the 83-year-old Australian tennis great for whom Melbourne Park's main stadium is named, was holding up his smartphone to capture the scenes. A woman nearby held up a sign that stated: "Rafa is the GOAT."

'PIKABOO'

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ride on. I'm happy they added and beefed up some jumps, the more jumps the more fun and it'll only make us better. Excited to see what else they do to the track!"

A total of nine dirt bike enthusiasts entered the Expert Class and the rest, with their points in parenthesis, are as follows: Ellery Cruz (36 points), Champi Villacanes (31 points), Patrick Togawa (30 points), Dave Celis (28 points), Melvin Cepeda (27 points), and MRA president Charles Cepeda (24 points).

In the Novice Class, Joseph Santos took the win by finishing first in the first heat and second in the second heat for a total of 47 points. He was followed by Ethan Yumul with 45 points including first place in the second head. Aric Cruz completed the Top 3 in the division with 42 points.

A total of 11 entered the Novice Class and the rest, with their points in parenthesis, are as follows: Bob Ferrer (36 points), Keoni Macaranas (32 points), Leonel Masga (28 points), Frankie Sablan (27 points), Cory Llagas (27 points), Maribel Igitol (26 points), Ponce Rasa (22 points), and Stanley Iakopo II (10 points).

Results of the Peewee ATV, Peewee I, Peewee II, Mini ATV, Mini I, Power Puff Girls, Mini II, Big Boy ATV, Novice, Intermediate, and Veterans classes will be reported in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

MGOC

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Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 and they are the following: Cook Islands (26), Fiji (104), Guam (146), Kiribati (46), Marshall Islands (26), Nauru (52), New Caledonia (128), Palau (129), Papua New Guinea (148), Tahiti (195), Tuvalu (57), Vanuatu (43), Wallis & Futuna (39), and the CNMI (175).

The nine countries that have yet to update their numeral entries are American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Australia, New Zealand, Niue, Norfolk Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga.

"We're just holding the numbers for nine countries that are uncertain because of COVID-19..." according to Babauta.

Babauta also proudly announced that with the addition of Nishtah Sharma Thomas as communications and marketing supervisor the staff of the MGOC is finally complete.

The rest of the MGOC include chair Marco Peter, sports director Ray Tebuteb, logistics supervisor Ezra Yumul, office manager and HR Michele Joab, finance manager Ladyvir Canape, and administrative assistant Marie Christ Fajardo Manebo.

In an email, Thomas said she arrived on Saipan a couple of weeks ago and have been working on boosting the Northern Marianas Mini Games' internet and social media presence. She also happily shared that the MGOC recently had a team-building activity with the help of the Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation.

"As a full staff, we are working on connecting with the local national teams and sports participating in the Games this summer. And so, after work [two Fridays ago], we met with the va'a team and learned some paddling tips and tricks from them!"

Thomas also provided an update on the renovations of the Oleai Sports Complex facilities leading up to the Mini Games this coming June

"Construction on Oleai Sports Complex is supposed to begin. We will be having badminton at the [Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium], athletics on the track and field, and baseball on the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field. For most of our other venues, we are just working on making sure they are up to the official Mini Games standards. We have also procured most of the materials required for each sport, like new V1 canoes and a nice new set of bikes for the triathlon competitors," she said.

She also encouraged anyone who has a lot of free time this coming Summer and also want to experience the Mini Games first hand to sign up as a volunteer.

"Want to be a part of the Games? Let us know how you would like to help, either right away with organization and planning, or during the event itself. Sign up to volunteer today at: https://northernmarianas2022.com/volunteer/."

Girls middle school volleyball resumes today

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2021-2022 season resumes today with three games scheduled in the girls division, while the boys division starts back up again on Thursday with three matches also on tap.

Games this afternoon start at 5pm with Hopwood Middle School taking on Dandan Middle School in the north court of the Marianas High School. Playing simultaneously in the south court are Tanapag Middle School 1 and Hopwood 2. The 6pm game will them pit Mt. Carmel School 2 vs. Saipan International School 1.

The boys will take the court two days later with SIS 1 squaring off against Saipan Community School at 5pm at the north court. At the same time in the south court, DMS will challenge Hopwood 1. The lone 6pm tiff will feature Francisco M. Sablan Middle School taking on Hopwood 2.

In results last week, Grace Christian Academy swept DMS, 21-9, 21-15. TMS 1 also outlasted FMS, 17-21, 21-16, 15-10, while MCS brought down TMS 2, 21-18, 21-9.

Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association president Somia Quan, meanwhile, welcomed the return of interscholastic volleyball after many starts and restarts were stymied by the COVID-19 outbreak in the community.

"We are excited to begin the start of middle school volleyball after we had postponements due to COVID and the school Winter break. On behalf of NMIVA, we thank our athletes and coaches and athlete supporters for being patient with us. We wish the best of luck to every participant! We'd also like to thank our PSS counterpart for working diligently to get volleyball season up and running and to keep the balls flying!" she said.

TAKECARE

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program that Northern Marianas Badminton Association and the CNMI Public School System Athletic Department are organizing. TakeCare has also donated uniforms to other middle school teams, including Rota and Tinian, that have initially committed to compete in the IBL, as well as the high school squads that will participate in the league later this month.

"We are thankful and pleased with our partnership with the NMBA and for the support of TakeCare Insurance. It's been a difficult year to expand the programs that we offer to our students at this time of the pandemic, but we are happy that we are moving forward with the interscholastic badminton competition. We've been discussing this for years and finally we are able to offer the program to our middle and high school students," PSS Athletic Program director Nick Gross said.

Gross added that they acknowledged the concerns of the community on the resumption of interscholastic programs but there are mitigation protocols in place to make sure that these activities are conducted safely. He also pointed out the benefits of playing sports, such as the interscholastic competitions, to the well-being of students at these difficult times.

Meanwhile, TakeCare Insurance administrative assistant/sales coordinator Leilani Pangelinan said their company is honored to be part of the program that promotes health and wellness and school pride.

"We are excited to sponsor the Interscholastic Badminton League. Good luck to all the players and the schools. Have fun, enjoy the games, and we look forward to an exciting first season of interscholastic badminton season," Pangelinan said.

NMBA president Merlie Tolentino thanked TakeCare, the CNMI PSS leadership, and Gross for making the inaugural season of interscholastic badminton league possible, as this is one crucial step that all stakeholders had to take to discover and develop young talents that would eventually help grow the sport in the NMI. ***(PR)***

Rams rally to Super Bowl with stunning win over Niners

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Nadal wins Australian Open for record 21st major title

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‘Pikaboo’ paces Expert Class via sweep

By MARK RABAGO
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Shane “Pikaboo” Alvarez drew first blood in the Expert Class of the 2022 Monster Energy Point Series Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.

The 28-year-old Financial & Insurance Services Group staff in fact finished ahead of his own blood, beating his dad, Cuki, 50 points to 44 points. The younger Alvarez topped both heats of the revamped track to hold off his father, while brother, Alverick, made it a family affair finishing third with 40 points.

“Definitely not an easy class to win so I’m pumped on the double first. Luckily on both heat races I had great starts and came out up front after the first turn,” he said.

Alvarez said one thing working for him Sunday was he was in pole position all throughout, which somehow helped him strategically to hold on to the lead.

“It was also a really hot dusty day so everyone behind had to ride with some dust clouds while I had a clear track so that also helped me out as well! I was able to hit all the good lines with ease and just controlled my breathing and kept trying to push until I got a good enough gap to where I could relax and ride safer. It was super fun though!” he added.

When asked about the re-configured the Cowtown Race Track for the 2022 MRA season, the younger Alvarez said it was a welcome addition, but not without its inherent challenges.

“The new additions to the track definitely make it more fun and challenging although still very safe for all ages to

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LAO ZHANG
Shane “Pikaboo” Alvarez gets up in the air while competing in the Expert Class of the 2022 Monster Energy Point Series Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.

TakeCare provides uniform to school teams

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
CNMI Public School System Athletic Program director Nick Gross, left, is joined by middle school coaches and Northern Marianas Badminton Association officials in receiving uniforms for the inaugural season of the TakeCare Interscholastic Badminton League from TakeCare Insurance Company, Inc. representatives during a brief ceremony last Friday at the TSL Plaza in Garapan.

The inaugural season of the TakeCare Interscholastic Badminton League kicked off last Saturday at the TSL Sports with students playing with their assigned uniforms donated by TakeCare Insurance Company, Inc.

The IBL started the season with games in the middle school division and before the matches, students from Hopwood Middle School 1 and 2 teams, Saipan International School, and Francisco M. Sablan Middle School were presented with their uniforms. TakeCare Insurance provided the uniforms to the four schools in support of the interscholastic

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MGOC to seek grants to help Tokelau send athletes

By MARK RABAGO
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The Northern Marianas Mini Games Organizing Committee is looking to help Tokelau send its athletes to this year’s Mini Games by tapping Pacific Games Council grants.

“Tokelau is a small, very tiny community and they’ve only sent a handful of athletes in previous Games. We’re trying to facilitate through the Pacific Games Council CEO Andrew Minogue if we can have access to grants to pay for Tokelau athletes’ airfare to the CNMI,” said MGOC CEO Vicente “Ben” Babauta.

He added that Tokelau to begin with is not expected to send a large delegation to the quadrennial event the Commonwealth will be hosting for the first ever.

“Only 5-10 small group of athletes. It would be nice for them to be here. If that grant application goes through,” he said.

Meanwhile, Babauta said he continues to push the 24 countries that’s part of the Pacific Games Council to update their numerical entries to this year’s Mini Games, including both athletes and officials.

He said, so far, 15 of the 24 have given their latest delegation numbers for the Northern

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Northern Marianas Mini Games Organizing Committee CEO Vicente “Ben” Babauta, third from left, poses with the rest of the MGOC staff led by chair Marco Peter, fourth from left, in this group shot with the complete MGOC staff.